



This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

- + *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.
- + *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.
- + *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.
- + *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

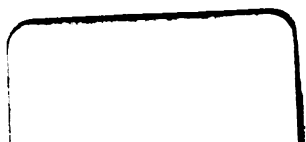
About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at <http://books.google.com/>

Doc 6412.5 (85)



HARVARD
COLLEGE
LIBRARY



NEW ZEALAND.

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES.

First Session of the Twelfth Parliament.

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL AND HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.

Eighty-fifth Volume.

COMPRISING THE PERIOD FROM
AUGUST 16 TO SEPTEMBER 14, 1894.



WELLINGTON.
BY AUTHORITY: S. COSTALL, GOVERNMENT PRINTER.

1894.

△
Cc Doc 6-112, 5L(83)1
✓



DEPOSITED BY HARVARD COLLEGE LIBRARY

LEGISLATURE OF NEW ZEALAND.

GOVERNOR.

His Excellency the Right Honourable DAVID, Earl of GLASGOW, Knight Grand Cross of the Most Distinguished Order of St. Michael and St. George.

THE MINISTRY.

Premier, Minister for Public Works, Minister of Defence, and Minister of Native Affairs	The Hon. RICHARD JOHN SEDDON.
Attorney-General and Colonial Secretary ..	The Hon. Sir PATRICK ALPHONSUS BUCKLEY, K.C.M.G.
Minister of Education, Commissioner of Stamp Duties, and Minister of Labour	The Hon. WILLIAM PEMBER REEVES.
Minister of Lands and Immigration, Minister of Agriculture, and Commissioner of Forests	The Hon. JOHN MCKENZIE.
Colonial Treasurer, Postmaster-General, Electric Telegraph Commissioner, Minister of Marine, Minister of Commerce and Industries, and Commissioner of Trade and Customs	The Hon. JOSEPH GEORGE WARD.
Minister of Mines and Minister of Justice ..	The Hon. ALFRED JEROME CADMAN.
Representing Native Race (without Portfolio) ..	The Hon. JAMES CARROLL.
Member of Executive Council ..	The Hon. WILLIAM MONTGOMERY.

ROLL OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCILLORS.

Acland, Hon. John Barton Arundel, Canterbury.	Montgomery, Hon. William, Canterbury.
Baillie, Hon. William Douglas Hall, Marlborough (Chairman of Committees).	Morris, Hon. George Bentham, Auckland.
Barnicoat, Hon. John Wallis, Nelson.	McCullough, Hon. William, Auckland.
Bolt, Hon. William Mouat, Otago.	McLean, Hon. George, Otago.
Bonar, Hon. James Alexander, Westland.	Oliver, Hon. Richard, Otago.
Bowen, Hon. Charles Christopher, Canterbury.	Ormond, Hon. John Davies, Napier.
Buckley, Hon. Sir Patrick Alphonsus, K.C.M.G., Wellington.	Peacock, Hon. John Thomas, Canterbury.
Dignan, Hon. Patrick, Auckland.	Pharazyn, Hon. Robert, Wellington.
Feldwick, Hon. Henry, Otago.	Pollen, Hon. Daniel, Auckland.
Grace, Hon. Morgan Stanislaus, C.M.G., Wellington.	Reynolds, Hon. William Hunter, Otago.
Hart, Hon. Robert, Wellington.	Richardson, Hon. Edward, O.M.G., Wellington.
Holmes, Hon. Mathew, Otago.	Rigg, Hon. John, Wellington.
Jenkinson, Hon. John Edward, Canterbury.	Scotland, Hon. Henry, Taranaki.
Jennings, Hon. William Thomas, Auckland.	Shephard, Hon. Joseph, Nelson.
Johnston, Hon. Charles John, Wellington.	Shrimski, Hon. Samuel Edward, Otago.
Kelly, Hon. Thomas, Taranaki.	Stevens, Hon. Edward Cephas John, Canterbury.
Kenny, Hon. Courtney William Aylmer Thomas, Marlborough.	Stewart, Hon. William Downie, Otago.
Kerr, Hon. James, Westland.	Swanson, Hon. William, Auckland.
MacGregor, Hon. John, Otago.	Taiaroa, Hon. Hori Kerei, Otago.
Mantell, Hon. Walter Baldock Durant, Wellington.	Wahawaha, Hon. Ropata, N.Z.C., Auckland.
Miller, Hon. Henry John, Otago (Speaker).	Walker, Hon. Lancelot, Canterbury.
	Walker, Hon. William Campbell, Canterbury.
	Whitmore, Hon. Sir George Stoddart, K.C.M.G., Hawke's Bay.
	Whyte, Hon. John Blair, Auckland.
	Williams, Hon. Henry, Auckland.

LIST OF MEMBERS OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.

Allen, James, Bruce.	Massey, William Ferguson, Waitemata.
Bell, Francis Henry Dillon, City of Wellington.	McGowan, James, Thames.
Buchanan, Walter Clarke, Wairarapa.	McGuire, Felix, Egmont.
Buddo, David, Kaiapoi.	McKenzie, Hon. John, Waihemo.
Buick, Thomas Lindsay, Wairau.	McKenzie, Roderick, Buller.
Button, Charles Edward, City of Auckland.	McLachlan, John, Ashburton.
Cadman, Hon. Alfred Jerome, Waikato.	McNab, Robert, Mataura.
Carncross, Walter Charles Frederick, Taieri.	Meredith, Richard, Ashley.
Carnell, Samuel, Napier.	Millar, John Andrew, Chalmers.
Carroll, Hon. James, Waipatu.	Mills, Charles Houghton, Waimea-Sounds.
Collins, William Whitehouse, City of Christchurch.	Mitchelson, Hon. Edwin, Eden.
Crowther, William, City of Auckland.	Montgomery, William Hugh, Ellesmere.
Duncan, Thomas, Oamaru.	Morrison, Arthur, Oaversham.
Duthie, John, City of Wellington.	Newman, Alfred Kingcome, Wellington Suburbs.
Earnshaw, William, City of Dunedin.	O'Regan, Patrick Joseph, Inangahua.
Flatman, Frederick Robert, Pareora.	O'Rorke, Hon. Sir George Maurice, Kt., Manukau (Speaker).
Fraser, William, Wakatipu.	Parata, Tame, Southern Maori.
Graham, John, City of Nelson.	Pere, Wi, Eastern Maori.
Green, James, Waikouaiti.	Pinkerton, David, City of Dunedin.
Gray, Right Hon. Sir George, K.C.B., City of Auckland.	Pirani, Frederick, Palmerston.
Guinness, Arthur Robert, Grey (Chairman of Committees).	Reeves, Hon. William Pember, City of Christchurch.
Hall, Charles, Waipawa.	Russell, George Warren, Riccarton.
Hall-Jones, William, Timaru.	Russell, William Russell, Hawke's Bay.
Harris, Benjamin, Franklin.	Saunders, Alfred, Selwyn.
Heke, Hone, Northern Maori.	Seddon, Hon. Richard John, Westland.
Hogg, Alexander Wilson, Masterton.	Smith, Edward Metcalf, New Plymouth.
Houston, Robert Morrow, Bay of Islands.	Smith, George John, City of Christchurch.
Hutchison, George, Patea.	Stevens, John, Rangitikei.
Hutchison, William, City of Dunedin.	Steward, Hon. William Jukes, Waitaki.
Joyce, John, Lyttelton.	Stout, Hon. Sir Robert, K.O.M.G., City of Wellington.
Kelly, James White, Invercargill.	Tanner, William Wilcox, Avon.
Kelly, William, Bay of Plenty.	Te Ao, Ropata, Western Maori.
Lang, Frederic William, Waipa.	Thompson, Robert, Marsden.
Larnach, Hon. W. J. M., C.M.G., Tuapeka.	Ward, Hon. Joseph George, Awarua.
Lawry, Frank, Parnell.	Willis, Archibald Duddingston, Wanganui.
Mackenzie, Thomas, Clutha.	Wilson, James Glenn, Otaki.
Mackintosh, James, Wallace.	
Maslin, William Stephen, Rangitata.	

INDEX

TO

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES.

VOLUME LXXXV.

AUGUST 16 TO SEPTEMBER 14, 1894.

EXPLANATION OF ABBREVIATIONS.

Int., Introduction of Bill.—**1r.**, **2r.**, **3r.**, First, Second, and Third Reading.—**Dis.**, Discharged.—**h.**, House of Representatives.—**l.c.**, Legislative Council.—**Adj.**, Adjournment or Adjourned.—**Amend.**, Amendment.—**cl.**, Clause.—**Com.**, Committee of the whole House or Committed.—**Recom.**, Recommended or Recommittal.—**Sel. Com.**, Select Committee.—**Conf.**, Conference.—**Cons.**, Consideration.—**Deb.**, Debate.—**Expl.**, Explanation.—**Instr.**, Instruction.—**m.**, Motion.—**Obs.**, Observation.—**q.**, Question.—**m.q.**, Main Question.—**p.q.**, Previous Question.—**Rep.**, Report.—**r.p.**, Report Progress.—**Res.**, Resolution.

A.

- | | |
|---|--|
| <p><i>Abattoirs Committee</i>,
<i>h.</i>, <i>m.</i> (Mr. Duncan), 162</p> <p><i>ACLAND</i>, Hon. J. B. A., <i>Canterbury</i>,
Hamilton Domains Empowering Bill, 3r.
618
Land for Settlements Bill, 2r. 224</p> <p><i>Addington Workshops Employés</i>,
<i>h.</i>, <i>q.</i> (Mr. Collins), 228</p> <p><i>Addison's Flat</i>,
<i>h.</i>, <i>q.</i> (Mr. O'Regan), 665</p> <p><i>Adjournment</i>,
<i>h.</i>, <i>m.</i> (Mr. Seddon), 19, 32; (Mr. R. McKenzie),
52; (Mr. McLachlan), 185; (Mr. Seddon),
198; (Sir R. Stout), 401; (Mr. Millar),
475; <i>m.</i> 488; (Captain Russell), 501; (Mr.
Thompson), 631; (Mr. J. W. Kelly), 667</p> <p><i>Adulterated Cream of Tartar, &c.</i>,
<i>h.</i>, <i>q.</i> (Mr. Earnshaw), 161</p> <p><i>Adulteration of Food</i>,
<i>h.</i>, <i>q.</i> (Mr. W. Hutchison), 473</p> <p><i>Adulteration Prevention Bill</i>,
<i>l.c.</i>, 3r. 9
<i>h.</i>, 1r. 20; 2r. 178; <i>Com.</i> 464</p> <p><i>Advances to Farmers and Grasiere</i>,
<i>h.</i>, <i>q.</i> (Mr. Hogg), 362</p> <p><i>Agricultural Department Leaflets</i>,
<i>h.</i>, <i>q.</i> (Mr. Montgomery), 456</p> | <p><i>Alcoholic Liquors Sale Control Bill</i>,
<i>h.</i>, 1r. 52</p> <p>ALLEN, Mr. J., <i>Bruce</i>,
Adjournment, <i>m.</i> 186, 200, 406, 492, 505
Civil Service, <i>m.</i> 117
Elective Executive Bill, 2r. 154
Mining Districts Land Occupation Bill, 2r.
683
Ocean Beach Public Domain Bill, <i>Com.</i> 31
Onehunga Cemetery Bill, <i>Com.</i> 27
Referendum Bill, 2r. 280
Riverton Harbour Board Empowering Bill,
3r. 168, 193
School-attendance Bill, 2r. 627
Semi-political Meetings at Parliament Build-
ings, <i>q.</i> 106
Supply—
Class II., 237, &c.
Class VIII., 375, &c.
Class IX., 381
Class XII., 383
Class XIII., 248, &c.
Class XV., 247
Class XVIII., 248
<i>m.</i> 348
Westport-Cardiff Coal Company, <i>Rep. Sel.</i>
<i>Com.</i> 384</p> <p><i>Amalgamation of Colonial and New Zealand
Banks</i>,
<i>h.</i>, <i>q.</i> (Mr. G. W. Russell), 399; <i>q.</i> (Mr. Pirani),
498; <i>Obs.</i> (Captain Russell), 545</p> <p><i>Animals Protection Bill</i>,
<i>l.c.</i>, 1r. 201; 2r. 251; 3r. 303</p> |
|---|--|

Aotea Harbour,
h., q. (Mr. Lang), 46

Arowhenua Destitute,
h., q. (Mr. Flatman), 107

Arundel Village Settlement,
h., q. (Mr. Maslin), 472

Auckland Harbour Board Empowering Bill,
h., 2B. and 3B. 193
l.c., 1B. 201 ; 2B. 353 ; 3B. 466

Audit of Local Bodies' Accounts,
h., q. (Mr. Montgomery), 456

Awamoko Post-office,
h., q. (Major Steward), 359

B.

BAILLIE, Hon. W. D. H., *Marlborough* (Chairman of Committees, l.c.),
Divorce Bill, Obs. 444
Standing Orders, m. 353

Bank of New Zealand and Colonial Bank,
h., Obs. (Captain Russell), 545

Bank of New Zealand,
h., q. (Mr. Joyce), 50

Bankruptcy Bill,
h., 1B. 497 ; 2B. 629

BARNICOAT, Hon. J. W., *Nelson,*
Hamilton Domains Empowering Bill, 3B. 617

BELL, Mr. F. H. D., *City of Wellington,*
Abattoirs Committee, m. 162
Adjournment, m. 198, 408, 480, 499, 668, 675
Civil Service, m. 117
Craig, W., Rep. Sel. Com. 104
Eketahuna Cemetery Bill, 2B. 197
Gaming Bill, Cons. of Amend. 272
Gisborne Harbour Bill, 2B. 194
Government Railways Bill, 3B. 589
Lake Forsyth Drainage Bill, 2B. 458 ; Com. 488
Land for Settlements Bill, Com. 8 ; 3B. 69
Mining Districts Land Occupation Bill, 2B. 679
Ngaere and other Blocks Native Claims Adjustment Bill, 2B. 461
Personal Explanation, Obs. 6
Rating of Crown Lands Bill, 2B. 607
Riverton Harbour Board Empowering Bill, 3B. 165
Shops and Shop-assistants Bill, Cons. of Amend. 233
Supply—
Class II., 238
Class III., 242
Class IV., 242, &c.
Class VII., 382
Class VIII., 378
Class XIV., 251
m. 326

BELL, Mr. F. H. D.—*continued.*
Westport-Cardiff Coal Company, Rep. Sel. Com. 383, 384, 452

Bellamy's,
h., Obs. (Mr. McGuire), 187

Bill Office,
h., q. (Mr. McLachlan), 182

Bills discharged,
h., 45, 470

BOLT, Hon. W. M., *Otago,*
Hamilton Domains Empowering Bill, 3B. 618
Harbours Bill, 3B. 663
Middle District of New Zealand University College Bill, 2B. 11
Riverton Harbour Board Empowering Bill, 2B. 445
Shops and Shop-assistants Bill, 2B. 389

BONAR, Hon. J. A., *Westland,*
Companies' Accounts Audit Bill, 2B. 15
Divorce and Matrimonial Causes Bill, Com. 99, 253 &c.
Equitable Insurance Company, q. 36
Factories Bill, 2B. 228
Fire and Marine Insurance Companies, q. 98
Greymouth Harbour Board Empowering Bill, 2B. 355
Harbours Bill, Com. 660 ; 3B. 662
Labour Bills Committee, m. 440
Oaths Bill, 2B. 252
Riverton Harbour Board Empowering Bill, 2B. 446
Shipping and Seamen's Bill, 2B. 305, 308, 311

Borough Boundaries,
h., q. (Mr. Buddo), 50

Borough of Oamaru Leasing Bill,
h., 2B. 193 ; 3B. 193
l.c., 1B. 201 ; 2B. 385 ; 3B. 495

BOWEN, Hon. C. C., *Canterbury,*
Divorce and Matrimonial Causes Bill, Com. 100, 253
Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Bill, Cons. of Amend. 39, 42
Middle District of New Zealand University College Bill, 2B. 9, 13
Municipal Petitions, m. 37
Ocean Beach Public Domain Bill, 2B. 176
Riverton Harbour Board Empowering Bill, 2B. 467
State Forests, m. 442
Telegraph Forms, q. 659

Brookside Post-office,
h., q. (Major Harris), 622

Brown, Major C.,
h., q. (Mr. McGuire), 630

BUCHANAN, Mr. W. C., *Wairarapa*
Adjournment, m. 185, 407, 504
Civil Service, m. 119
Featherston Courthouse, q. 500

BUCHANAN, Mr. W. C.—continued.

Government Railways Bill, 2*a*. 540
 Land for Settlements Bill, 3*a*. 89
 Rating on Unimproved Value Bill, 2*a*. 412;
 3*a*. 510

BUCKLEY, Hon. Sir P. A., K.C.M.G., Wellington
 (Attorney-General and Colonial Secretary),

Animals Protection Bill, 2*a*. 251
 Cheviot Estate, *q*. 36
 Equitable Insurance Company, *q*. 34, &c.
 Factories Bill, 2*a*. 225
 Fire and Marine Insurance Companies, *q*. 99
 Foundation of the Colony, *m*. 386, 616
 Harbours Bill, 2*a*. 43
 Labour Bills Committee, *m*. 440
 Land for Settlements Bill, 2*a*. 220
 Middle District of New Zealand University
 College Bill, 2*a*. 12; Com. 156
 Oaths Bill, 2*a*. 252
 Personal Explanation, Obs. 38
 Railway Commissioners' Report, *q*. 1
 Shipping and Seamen's Bill, 2*a*. 307
 Shops and Shop-assistants Bill, 2*a*. 387, 397
 State Forests, *m*. 443
 Telegraph Forms, *q*. 659
 Wharekahika-Raukokore Postal Service, *q*. 32

BUDDO, Mr. D., Kaiapoi,

Adjournment, *m*. 57
 Borough Boundaries, *q*. 50
 Factories Bill, Com. 172
 Government Advances to Settlers Bill, 2*a*.
 711
 Import Duty on Wheat, *q*. 360
 Inspection of Machinery Bill, 2*a*. 673
 Lake Forsyth Drainage Bill, 2*a*. 459
 Shops and Shop-assistants Bill, Cons. of
 Amend. 236
 Supply—
 Class VIII., 372, &c.
 Class XIII., 249

BUICK, Mr. T. L., Wairau,

Friendly Societies' Cheques, *q*. 51
 Government Railways Bill, 2*a*. 571; Com. 646
 Mining Districts Land Occupation Bill, 2*a*.
 682
 School-attendance Bill, 2*a*. 625
 Supply—
 Class VIII., 376, &c.
 Class XIII., 250

BUTTON, Mr. C. E., City of Auckland,

Adjournment, *m*. 507
 Criminal Code Bill, Com. 659
 Onehunga Cemetery Bill, Com. 27
 Shops and Shop-assistants Bill, Cons. of
 Amend. 283
 Supply—
 Class VIII., 371, &c.
 Vaila Railway System, *m*. 257

C.

CADMAN, Mr. A. J., Waikato (Minister of Mines
 and Minister of Justice),
 Adulterated Cream of Tartar, &c., *q*. 161

CADMAN, Mr. A. J.—continued.

Charleston-Grey Valley Road, *q*. 363
 Cruelty to Animals, *q*. 2
 "Gallant Tip" Lease, *q*. 47
 Government Advertising, *q*. 182
 Grocer, South Dunedin, imprisoned, *q*. 364
 Hange, A. G., *q*. 50
 Horowhenua Stipendiary Magistrate, *q*. 180
 Inglewood Stipendiary Magistrate's Court,
q. 52
 Inspector of Mines' Report, *q*. 229
 Licenses, *q*. 161
 McArthur-Forrest Cyanide Gold-extraction
 Process, *q*. 51
 O'Halloran, *q*. 48
 Rock-boring Machine, *q*. 107
 Supply—
 Class II., 238, &c.
 Class IV., 242, &c.
 Class IX., 381
 Tairua Land, *q*. 363
 West Coast Water-race, *q*. 106

**Canterbury Industrial Hall and Technical
 School,**

h., *q*. (Mr. Joyce), 3

Cape Kidnappers Lighthouse,

h., *q*. (Mr. Carnell), 472

CARNCROSS, Mr. W. C. F., Taieri,

Government Railways Bill, 3*a*. 578
 Supply—
 Class XIII., 249
 Waipori Miners, *q*. 184

CARNELL, Mr. S., Napier,

Cape Kidnappers Lighthouse, *q*. 472
 Government Advertisements, *m*. 566
 Napier Cemetery, *q*. 471
 Supply—
 Class II., 287, &c.
 Class XII., 383
 Class XIV., 251
 Vaccination, *q*. 472

CARROLL, Mr. J., Waiapu (Member of Execu-
 tive representing Native Race, without
 portfolio),

Effective Executive Bill, 2*a*. 154
 Gisborne Harbour Bill, 2*a*. 194, 196
 Native Rights Bill, 2*a*. 554
 Ngaere and other Blocks Native Claims
 Adjustment Bill, 2*a*. 462
 Rating of Native Land, *q*. 162
 Supply—
 Class II., 241

Cathro, W. N.,

h., *q*. (Mr. J. W. Kelly), 666

Cattle ordered to be destroyed,

h., *q*. (Mr. Pirani), 358

Charges against the Police,

h., *q*. (Mr. Maslin), 499

Charleston-Grey Valley Road,

h., *q*. (Mr. O'Regan), 363

Chattels Transfer Bill,
h., 1B. 497

Cheviot Estate,
l.c., q. (Hon. Mr. Stevens), 36

Chinese,
h., q. (Mr. Hogg), 498

Christchurch Supreme Court,
h., q. (Mr. Collins), 473

Christchurch Unemployed,
h., q. (Mr. G. J. Smith), 229

Civil Service,
h., m. (Mr. Duthie), 108

Clement, J. R.,
h., q. (Major Steward), 158

COLLINS, Mr. W. W., *City of Christchurch,*
Addington Workshops Employés, q. 228
Adjournment, m. 488, 639
Christchurch Supreme Court, q. 473
Dairy Expert, q. 158
Government Railways Bill, 8B. 593
Land for Settlements Bill, 8B. 78
Licensing Bill, 2B. 654
Onehunga Cemetery Bill, Com. 27
Referendum Bill, 2B. 293
Shops and Shop-assistants Bill, Cons. of
Amend. 235
Supply—
Class VIII., 379
Class XII., 888
m. 349

Companies' Accounts Audit Bill,
l.c., 1B. 1; 2B. 13; Com. 101; 3B. 154

Consolidated Fund,
h., m. (Mr. G. Hutchison), 267

Consolidated Loan, 1867,
h., q. (Mr. Duthie), 49

Cook Islands,
h., q. (Mr. W. Hutchison), 399

"*Corners,*"
h., q. (Mr. W. Hutchison), 399

Coroners' Inquests Bill,
h., 2B. 546

Counties Vehicle-licensing Bill,
h., 1B. 101

Count-out,
h., 565

County Council Valuations,
h., q. (Mr. Thompson), 457

Craig, W.,
h., Rep. Sel. Com. 101

Criminal Code Bill,
h., 2B. 620; Com. 658

CROWTHER, Mr. W., *City of Auckland,*
Adjournment, m. 199, 482
Elective Executive Bill, 2B. 150
Government Railways Bill, 2B. 584
Land for Settlements Bill, 8B. 85
Onehunga Cemetery Bill, Com. 25
Rating of Crown Lands Bill, 2B. 610
Rating on Unimproved Value Bill, 2B. 430
Supply—
Class IV., 243, &c.
m., 326
Vaile Railway System, m. 259
Westport-Cardiff Coal Company, Rep. Sel.
Com. 448

Cruelty to Animals,
h., q. (Mr. Duthie), 2

Cyanide Solution,
h., q. (Mr. McGowan), 629

D.

Dairy Expert,
h., q. (Mr. Collins), 158

Dairy Factories and Creameries,
h., q. (Major Steward), 46

Dairy Industry Bill,
h., 2B. 313

Dairy Inspection,
l.c., q. (Hon. Mr. Jenkinson), 303

Dargaville-Opunake Telegraph,
h., q. (Mr. Houston), 666

Death of Tawhiao,
h., q. (Major Harris), 365

Defences,
h., q. (Mr. G. J. Smith), 229

Designation of Districts Bill,
h., 2B. 178; Com. 465; 3B. 466

Destitute Persons Bill,
h., 2B. 178; Com. 486; 3B. 565

District Judge Kettle,
h., q. (Mr. Willis), 474

Divisions,
h., Abattoirs Committee, m. 162
Adjournment, m. 19, 32, 494
Adulteration Prevention Bill, Com. 464
Criminal Code Bill, Com. 658
Designation of Districts Bill (No. 2), Com.
465
Dunedin Public Abattoirs Bill, Com. 30
Elective Executive Bill, 2B. 154
Factories Bill, Com. 171
Gaming Bill, Conf. 411

Divisions—continued.

- h.*, Government Railways Bill, 2*r.* 538, 606 ;
Com. 623, 647
Harbour and Education Reserves Bill, 2*r.*
675
Hawkers and Pedlars Bill, Com. 189
Imprest Supply Bill, Com. 313
Lake Forsyth Drainage Bill, Com. 488
Land for Settlements Bill, Com. 7, 17 ; 3*r.*
94
Monday Sittings, *m.* 187
Ocean Beach Public Domain Bill, Com. 31
Onahunga Cemetery Bill, 2*r.* 4 ; Com. 29,
194
Rangiwaea Block, Rep. Sel. Com. 178
Rating of Crown Lands Bill, 2*r.* 615
Rating on Unimproved Value Bill, 2*r.* 489 ;
Com. 463, 486
Referendum Bill, 2*r.* 303
Riverton Harbour Board Empowering Bill,
Com. 31, 164
Shipping and Seamen's Bill, Com. 172, 188
Shops and Shop-assistants Bill, Com. 188 ;
Cons. of Amends. 234
Supply—
Class II., 239, 240
Class VIII., 377, 378
Class XIII., 248, 250
Class XV., 246
m. 352
Vaile Railway System, *m.* 266
Wairarapa Hospital District Bill, Com. 30
Wellington City Drainage Empowering Bill,
Com. 5, 30
Westport-Cardiff Coal Company, Rep. Sel.
Com. 384
l.c., Borough of Oamaru Leasing Bill, 3*r.* 496
Companies' Accounts Audit Bill, Com. 101
Divorce and Matrimonial Causes Bill, Com.
101, 253, 312
Dunedin Loan Conversion Bill, Com. 444
Gaming Bill, Com. 154
Legitimation Bill, Com. 178, 312
Middle District of New Zealand University
College Bill, Com. 155, 177
Municipal Petitions, *m.* 38
Ocean Beach Public Domain Bill, 2*r.* 176,
177
Oaths Bill, Com. 565
Riverton Harbour Board Empowering Bill,
2*r.* 469

Divorce and Matrimonial Causes Bill,
l.c., Com. 99, 253, 312 ; *q.* 444 ; Com. 444

- DUNCAN, Mr. T., Oamaru,
Abattoirs Committee, *m.* 162
Adjournment, *m.* 186
Civil Service, *m.* 114
Craig, W., Rep. Sel. Com. 103
Inspection of Boilers, *q.* 179
Inspection of Machinery Bill, 2*r.* 676
Land for Settlements Bill, 3*r.* 63
Supply—
Class VIII., 371
m. 350
Westport-Cardiff Coal Company, Rep. Sel.
Com. 448

- Dunedin Loan Conversion Bill,*
h., 2*r.* 197 ; 3*r.* 197
l.c., 1*r.* 201 ; 2*r.* 356 ; Com. 444 ; 3*r.* 466

- Dunedin Public Abattoirs Bill,*
h., Com. 30

- Duntroon-Livingstone Telephone,*
h., *q.* (Major Steward), 157

- DUTHIE, Mr. J., *City of Wellington,*
Civil Service, *m.* 108
Consolidated Loan, 1867, 49
Cruelty to Animals, *q.* 2
Education Report, *q.* 499
O'Halloran, J., *q.* 48
Telegraph Operators, *q.* 501

E.

- EARNSHAW, Mr. W., *City of Dunedin,*
Adjournment, *m.* 54, 56, 199, 481, 483, 491,
634
Adulterated Cream of Tartar, &c., *q.* 161
Government Railways Bill, 2*r.* 532
Inspection of Machinery Bill, 2*r.* 676
Land for Settlements Bill, Com. 17, 19 ; 3*r.*
72
Rating on Unimproved Value Bill, Com. 487 ;
3*r.* 510
Riverton Harbour Board Empowering Bill,
Com. 31 ; 3*r.* 167, 193
Shops and Shop-assistants, Com. 188 ; 3*r.* 236
Supply—
Class II., 238
Class III., 242
m. 383
Vaile Railway System, *m.* 261
Westport-Cardiff Coal Company, Rep. Sel.
Com. 448

- East Tamaki Post-office,*
h., *q.* (Major Harris), 622

- Education Endowments,*
h., *q.* (Mr. McGuire), 456

- Education Report,*
h., *q.* (Mr. Duthie), 499

- Eight Hours Bill,*
h., *q.* (Mr. Hall-Jones), 472

- Eketahuna Cemetery Reserve Bill,*
h., 2*r.* and 3*r.* 197
l.c., 1*r.* 201 ; 2*r.* 353 ; 3*r.* 385

- Eketahuna Post- and Telegraph-office,*
h., *q.* (Mr. Hogg), 621

- Elective Education Bodies,*
h., *q.* (Mr. Flatman), 400

- Emigration,*
h., *q.* (Dr. Newman), 181

- Encouraging Arts and Industries,*
h., *q.* (Mr. Hogg), 105

Equitable Insurance Company, Dunedin,
h., q. (Hon. Mr. Kerr), 38

Eugene, "Medical Healer,"
h., q. (Mr. Willis), 4

Exemption of Improvements from Taxation,
h., q. (Mr. Graham), 497

F.

Factories Bill,
h., Com. 169; 3R. 187
l.c., 1R. 173; 2R. 225

Fairburn School,
h., m. (Mr. Houston), 45

Featherston Courthouse,
h., q. (Mr. Buchanan), 500

Federation,
h., q. (Mr. Guinness), 457

Feilding and Hunterville Post-offices,
h., q. (Mr. Stevens), 255

FELDWICK, Hon. H., *Otago,*
Animals Protection Bill, 2R. 251
Riverton Harbour Board Empowering Bill,
2R. 444, 469
Standing Orders, m. 358

Female-refuge Work,
h., q. (Mr. G. W. Russell), 48

Fencing Bill,
h., 2R. 398

Fencing-lines between Europeans' and Natives' Land,
h., q. (Mr. Hogg), 365

Fernhill Railway,
h., m. (Mr. J. McKenzie), 271; q. (Mr. Millar),
364

Financial Debate,
h., q. (Mr. W. Hutchison), 3

Fire and Marine Insurance Companies,
l.c., q. (Hon. Mr. Bonar), 98

FLATMAN, Mr. F. R., *Pareora,*
Adjournment, m. 186, 492, 674
Arowhenua Destitute, q. 107
Elective Education Bodies, q. 400
Government Railways Bill, 2R. 581
School-books, q. 107
Supply—
Class VIII., 375
Tenants' Right Bill, q. 400

Flax,
h., q. (Mr. E. M. Smith), 680

Food and Drugs imported,
h., q. (Mr. W. Hutchison), 566

Foreign Insurance Companies' Deposits Bill,
h., Dis. 470; 1R. 546

Forest Reserves,
h., q. (Mr. Montgomery), 475

Foundation of the Colony,
l.c., m. (Hon. Dr. Pollen), 385, 616
h., Sel. Com. 458

Fox, Colonel,
h., q. (Mr. O'Regan), 255

FRASER, Mr. W., *Wakatipu,*
Gore-Kelso Railway, q. 631
Luggate Telephone, q. 500
Mining Districts Land Occupation Bill, 2R. 682
Rating of Crown Lands Bill, 2R. 610
Rating on Unimproved Value Bill, 2R. 426;
Com. 487

Friedlander, H.,
h., Rep. Sel. Com. 179

Friendly Societies' Cheques,
h., q. (Mr. Buick), 51

Frozen-meat Export,
h., q. (Mr. W. Hutchison), 3

Fruit-growing,
h., q. (Mr. T. Mackenzie), 400

G.

"Gallant Tip" Lease,
h., q. (Mr. Carroll), 47; m. (Mr. Mitchelson),
101

Gaming Bill,
h., Cons. of Amends. 272, 313; Conf. 411,
475, 516
l.c., 2R. 1; Com. 154; 3R. 173; Conf. 357, 440,
470, 496, 565

Gebbie's Valley Telegraph,
h., q. (Mr. Montgomery), 629

Gisborne Harbour Bill,
h., 2R. 194; Com. 198; 3R. 198
l.c., 1R. 201; 2R. 619

Gore-Kelso Railway,
h., q. (Mr. Fraser), 631

Government Advances to Settlers Bill,
h., 1R. 546; 2R. 684

Government and Municipal Debentures,
h., m. (Mr. G. Hutchison), 470

Government Advertisements,
h., m. (Dr. Newman), 107; q. (Sir R. Stout),
182, 398; m. (Sir R. Stout), 447; m. (Mr.
Carnell), 566

Government Debentures,
h., m. (Mr. G. Hutchison), 565

Government Loans to Local Bodies,
h., q. (Mr. G. Hutchison), 364

Government Printing Office,
h., q. (Mr. Pinkerton), 457

Government Railways Bill,
h., 2B. 516, 567; Com. 623, 646; q. (Major Steward), 666

GRAHAM, Mr. J., *City of Nelson,*
Adjournment, m. 55
Exemption of Improvements from Taxation,
q. 497
Factories Bill, Com. 171
School-attendance Bill, 2B. 627
Supply—
Class IV., 243
Class VIII., 374
Wangamoa Accommodation-house, q. 49

Gravel-pits,
h., q. (Mr. G. J. Smith), 566

GREEN, Mr. J., *Waikouaiti,*
Civil Service, m. 120
Craig, W., Rep. Sel. Com. 104
Supply—
Class VIII., 374, 380

Greymouth Harbour Board Empowering Bill,
h., 3B. 193
l.c., 1B. 201; 2B. 854; 3B. 885

Grocer, South Dunedin, imprisoned,
h., q. (Mr. W. Hutchison), 364, 473

Guaranteed Banks Amalgamation Prohibition Bill,
h., 1B. 470

GUINNESS, Mr. A. R., *Grey* (Chairman of Committees, h.),
Civil Service, m. 109
Federation, q. 457
Local Government, q. 181
Mining Districts Land Occupation Bill, 2B. 679
Rock-boring Machine, q. 107
Telephone Exchange Ladies, m. 108

H.

HALL, Mr. C., *Waipawa,*
Civil Service, m. 110, 119, 121
Lake Forsyth Drainage Bill, 2B. 460
Mangaramarama Creek, q. 622
Ormondville Police Accommodation, q. 400
Rating on Unimproved Value Bill, 2B. 427;
m. 513
School-attendance Bill, 2B. 625
Shops and Shop-assistants Bill, m. 293
Supply—
Class VIII., 372, 376

HALL-JONES, Mr. W., *Timaru,*
Eight Hours Bill, q. 472

HALL-JONES, Mr. W.—*continued.*
Supply—
Class VIII., 379, 383

Hamilton Domains Empowering Bill,
h., 2B. and 3B. 193
l.c., 1B. 201; 2B. 853, 496; Com. 565; 3B. 616

Harbour and Education Reserves Bill,
h., 1B. 621; 2B. 675

Harbours Bill,
h., 3B. 1
l.c., 1B. 9; 2B. 43; Sel. Com. 154, 659

HARRIS, Mr. B., *Franklin,*
Brookside Post-office, q. 622
Civil Service, m. 119
Death of Tawhiao, q. 365
East Tamaki Post-office, q. 622
Rating on Unimproved Value Bill, 2B. 436
Supply—
Class XIII., 250
m. 351
Town Districts Bill, 2B. 549
Volunteers, q. 363

Hastings Borough Loan Validation and Empowering Bill,
h., 1B. 546; 2B. 629; 3B. 663

Hastings Post- and Telegraph-office,
h., q. (Captain Russell), 566

Havelock Commonage Bill,
h., 3B. 20
l.c., 1B. 32; 2B. 173; 3B. 201

Hawkers and Pedlars Bill,
h., Com. 189

HEKE, Mr. H., *Northern Maori,*
Destitute Persons Bill, Com. 486
Kaikohe Native Licensing District, q. 474
Licensing Bill, 2B. 655
Native Rights Bill, 2B. 550
Ngaere and other Blocks Native Claims Adjustment Bill, 2B. 461
Rating on Unimproved Value Bill, 2B. 413
Referendum Bill, 2B. 300
Supply—
Class II., 241
Class IV., 245
Class VIII., 377

Henge, A. G.,
h., q. (Mr. Pirani), 50

Hikurangi-Kawakawa Railway,
h., q. (Mr. Houston), 665

Hikurangi Unemployed,
h., q. (Mr. Thompson), 630, 667

Hikutaita No. 1 Block Boundary Bill,
h., 1B. 357

HOGG, Mr. A. W., *Masterton,*
Advances to Farmers and Graziers, q. 362

HOGG, Mr. A. W.—continued.

Adjournment, *m.* 482, 492, 639
 Chinese, *q.* 498
 Consolidated Fund, *m.* 269
 Eketahuna Cemetery Reserve Bill, 2*r.* 197
 Eketahuna Post- and Telegraph-office, *q.* 621
 Elective Executive Bill, 2*r.* 148
 Encouraging Arts and Industries, *q.* 105
 Government Railways Bill, 2*r.* 543
 Fencing-lines between Europeans' and
 Natives' Land, *q.* 365
 Rating on Unimproved Value Bill, 2*r.* 416
 Referendum Bill, 2*r.* 295
 Shops and Shop-assistants Bill, *m.* 232
 Supply—
 Class II., 238, 239
 Class IV., 243
 Class VIII., 375, 380
 Class XIII., 249
 Class XIV., 250
m. 330

Horowhenua Post-office,
h., q. (Mr. Pirani), 499, 567

Horowhenua Stipendiary Magistrate,
h., q. (Mr. Wilson), 180

HOUSTON, Mr. R. M., Bay of Islands,
 Adjournment, *m.* 634
 Dargaville-Opunake Telegraph, *q.* 666
 Factories Bill, 3*r.* 187
 Fairburn School, *m.* 45
 Hawkers and Pedlars Bill, Com. 189
 Hukerenui Telephone, *q.* 359
 Kaikohe Telegraph, *q.* 359
 Postal Notes, *q.* 358
 Rangiwaea Block, *m.* 178
 Shipping and Seamen's Bill, Com. 173

Hukerenui Telephone,
h., q. (Mr. Houston), 359

HUTCHISON, Mr. G., Patea,
 Adjournment, *m.* 58, 198, 405, 505, 670
 Consolidated Fund, *m.* 267, 270
 Craig, W., *m.* 103
 Government Advances to Settlers Bill, 2*r.*
 692
 Government and Municipal Debentures, *m.*
 470
 Government Debentures, *m.* 565
 Government Loans to Local Bodies, *q.* 364
 Imprest Supply Bill (No. 3), Com. 313
 Land for Settlements Bill, 3*r.* 92
 Lease in Perpetuity, *q.* 181
 Local Bodies "Thirds" and "Fourths," *q.*
 359, 363, 399
 Native Rights Bill, 2*r.* 560
 New Plymouth Harbour, *m.* 370
 Ngaere and other Blocks Native Claims Ad-
 justment Bill, 2*r.* 462
 Supply—
 Class II., 238, 240, 241
 Class IV., 243, 245
m. 313, 323
 Town Districts Bill, 2*r.* 546, 549
 Westport-Cardiff Coal Company, *m.* 448

HUTCHISON, Mr. W., City of Dunedin,
 Adjournment, *m.* 186, 476, 484
 Adulteration of Food, *q.* 478
 Adulteration Prevention Bill, Com. 464
 Civil Service, *m.* 118
 Cook Islands, *q.* 399
 "Corners," *q.* 399
 Food and Drugs imported, *q.* 566
 Grocer, South Dunedin, imprisoned, *q.* 364,
 473
 Import Duties, *q.* 47
 Natives not paying Dog-tax, *q.* 106.
 Shipping and Seamen's Bill, 3*r.* 281
 Supply—
 Class II., 239, 240
 Class VIII., 374
 Tariff Rates between Colonies, *q.* 230

I.

Import Duties,
h., q. (Mr. W. Hutchison), 47

Import Duty on Fruit,
h., q. (Dr. Newman), 180

Import Duty on Wheat,
h., q. (Mr. Buddo), 360

Imported Fruit,
h., q. (Mr. Mills), 663

Imprest Supply Bill (No. 3),
*l.c., 1*r.*, 2*r.*, 3*r.* 312*
*h., 1*r.*, 2*r.*, 3*r.* 313*

Inangahua County Council Empowering Bill,
*h., 3*r.* 193*
*l.c., 1*r.* 201 ; 2*r.* 353 ; 3*r.* 385*

Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Bill,
h., Cons. of Amend. 1
l.c., Cons. of Amend. 39

Inglewood Stipendiary Magistrate's Court,
h., q. (Mr. McGuire), 52

Inglewood-Tarata Road,
h., q. (Mr. McGuire), 161

Inspection of Boilers,
h., q. (Mr. Duncan), 179

Inspection of Machinery Bill,
*h., 1*r.* 470 ; 2*r.* 676*

Inspector of Mines' Report,
h., q. (Mr. Morrison), 223

Isbister's Unsinkable Ship,
h., q. (Mr. Millar), 364

Invercargill Racecourse Trustees Empowering
Bill,
*h., 1*r.* 398*
*l.c., 1*r.* 9 ; 2*r.* 251 ; 3*r.* 385*

J.

Jackman, J.,
h., q. (Dr. Newman), 182

James Mitchell Trust Bill,
h., 1B. 178

JENKINSON, Hon. J. E., Canterbury,
Animals Protection Bill, 2B. 251
Dairy Inspection, m. 303
Factories Bill, 2B. 226
Greymouth Harbour Board Empowering Bill,
2B. 354
Hamilton Domains Empowering Bill, 2B.
353
Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Bill,
m. 41, 43
Middle District of New Zealand University
College Bill, Com. 177
Shipping and Seamen's Bill, 2B. 305, 310

JENNINGS, Hon. W. T., Auckland,
Equitable Insurance Company, Dunedin, m.
36
Hamilton Domains Empowering Bill, 2B.
354; 3B. 619
Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Bill,
m. 40
Pensions paid outside of the Colony, m. 99
Shipping and Seamen's Bill, 2B. 307
Shops and Shop-assistants Bill, 2B. 395

JOYCE, Mr. J., Lyttelton,
Bank of New Zealand, q. 50
Friedlander, Hermann, m. 179
Reciprocal Treaty with Canada, q. 358
Railways, q. 107
Tariff Treaty with Australia, q. 50

K.

Kaikohe Native Licensing District,
h., q. (Mr. Heke), 474

Kaikohe Telegraph,
h., q. (Mr. Houston), 358

Kaitangata Relief Fund Transfer Bill,
h., 2B. 193; 3B. 193
l.c., 1B. 201; 2B. 353; 3B. 440

Kawhia,
h., q. (Mr. Lang), 497

KELLY, Mr. J. W., Invercargill,
Adjournment, m. 667, 675
Cathro, W. N., q. 666
Government Railways Bill, 2B. 596; Com.
624
Railway Union, q. 622
Rating on Unimproved Value Bill, 2B. 431
Supply—
Class II., 238, 241
Class V., 245
Class VI., 246
Class VIII., 371, 375, 380

KELLY, Mr. J. W.—continued.

Supply—*continued.*
Class XIII., 249
Class XV., 246
Class XVI., 248

KELLY, Hon. T., Taranaki,
Equitable Insurance Company, Dunedin, m.
35
Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Bill,
m. 42
Middle District of New Zealand University
College Bill, 2B. 12; Com. 156
State Forests, m. 443

KELLY, Mr. W., Bay of Plenty,
Riverton Harbour Board Empowering Bill,
2B. 468
Waiotapu-Taupo Road, q. 180

KERR, Hon. J., Westland,
Divorce and Matrimonial Causes Bill, Com.
101
Equitable Insurance Company, Dunedin,
q. 33, 35
Greymouth Harbour Board Empowering Bill,
2B. 354, 355
Harbours Bill Committee, 661
Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Bill,
m. 43
Riverton Harbour Board Empowering Bill,
2B. 467
Shops and Shop-assistants Bill, 2B. 394

Kirikiri Native School Site Bill,
h., 2B. 462

Kuaotunu-Whangapoua Mail-service,
h., q. (Mr. McGowan), 629

L.

Labour Bills Committee,
l.c., m. (Hon. Mr. MacGregor), 440

Lake Forsyth Drainage Bill,
h., 1B. 254; 2B. 458; Com. 488
l.c., 2B. 615

Land-drainage Bill,
h., 1B. 620

Land for Settlements Bill,
h., Com. 7, 17; 3B. 59; q. (Mr. Bell), 131
l.c., 1B. 98; 2B. 201

LANG, Mr. F. W., Waipa,
Aotea Harbour, q. 46
Kawhia, q. 497
Postal Notes, q. 353
Rating on Unimproved Value Bill, 2B. 431
Tuakau-Onewhero Punt, q. 46

LARNACH, Mr. W. J. M., C.M.G., Tuapeka,
Bank of New Zealand and Colonial Bank,
Obs. 545
"Gallant Tip" Lease, q. 47
Miller's Flat Punt, q. 160
Shops and Shop-assistants Bill, 2B. 232

LARNACH, Mr. W. J. M., C.M.G.—*continued*.
 Waipahi—Heriotburn Railway, *q.* 664
 Waipori Gold-dredging Companies, *q.* 229

LAWBY, Mr. F., *Parnell*,
 Gaming Bill, *m.* 411
 Manure in Boroughs, *q.* 498
 Onehunga Cemetery Bill, *Com.* 26
 Vaile Railway System, *m.* 262

Leaseholders of Reserves,
h., *q.* (Mr. McGuire), 364

Lease in Perpetuity,
h., *q.* (Mr. G. Hutchison), 181

Legitimation Bill,
l.c., *Com.* 177; *3R.* 312

Levels County Bill,
h., *3R.* 1
l.c., *1R.* 9; *2R.* 98

Licenses,
h., *q.* (Mr. McGuire), 161

Licensing Bill,
h., *Dis.* 45; *q.* (Mr. McNab), 475; *2R.* 647;
q. (Mr. Wilson), 665

Licensing Elections,
h., *m.* (Mr. Hall), 267

Little Barrier Island,
h., *q.* (Mr. Mitchelson), 180

Little Wanganui Mail-service,
h., *q.* (Mr. R. McKenzie), 1

Local Bodies' Assessments,
h., *q.* (Major Steward), 665

Local Bodies' Loans,
h., *q.* (Mr. Millar), 471, 567

Local Bodies' "Thirds" and "Fourths,"
h., *q.* (Mr. G. Hutchison), 359, 363

Local Government,
h., *q.* (Mr. Guinness), 181

Luggage Telephone,
h., *q.* (Mr. Fraser), 500

Lunatic Asylum Attendants,
h., *q.* (Mr. G. W. Russell), 497

M.

MACGREGOR, Hon. J., *Otago*,
 Borough of Oamaru Leasing Bill, *3R.* 494,
 495
 Divorce and Matrimonial Causes Bill, *Com.*
 99
 Gaming Bill, *m.* 357, 440, 470; *Rep. of Conf.*
 565
 Hamilton Domains Empowering Bill, *3R.*
 618

MACGREGOR, Hon. J.—*continued*.
 Harbours Bill, *Com.* 662
 Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Bill,
Cons. of Amend. 41
 Labour Bills Committee, *m.* 440
 Legitimation Bill, *Com.* 177
 Municipal Petitions, *m.* 38
 Oaths Bill, *2R.* 252; *Com.* 565
 Ocean Beach Public Domain Bill, *2R.* 174,
 176
 Shops and Shop-assistants Bill, *2R.* 392
 Timaru Harbour District Rating Bill, *2R.*
 173, 174

MACKENZIE, Mr. T., *Clutha*,
 Adjournment, *m.* 199, 480, 607
 Consolidated Fund, *m.* 268
 Craig, W., *m.* 101
 Government Railways Bill, *2R.* 584
 Land for Settlements Bill, *3R.* 79
 Mortgage-tax on Farmers, *q.* 179
 Native Rights Bill, *2R.* 559
 Onehunga Cemetery Bill, *2R.* 26
 Rating on Unimproved Value Bill, *2R.* 415
 School-attendance Bill, *2R.* 627
 Shops and Shop-assistants Bill, *Com.* 188;
Cons. of Amend. 233
 Supply—
 Class II., 238, &c.
 Class VIII., 376
m. 319

Mackenzie County Boundaries Bill,
l.c., *1R.* 303

MACKINTOSH, Mr. J., *Wallace*,
 Civil Service, *m.* 119
 Government Advances to Settlers Bill, *2R.*
 714
 Land for Settlements Bill, *3R.* 86
 Rating on Unimproved Value Bill, *2R.* 425
 Riverton Harbour Board Empowering Bill,
Com. 162
 Supply—
m. 328

Makohine Viaduct,
h., *q.* (Mr. Stevens), 666

Mangere Cemetery Trust Board,
h., *q.* (Mr. Mitchelson), 160

Mangapai-Paroti Telephone,
h., *q.* (Mr. Thompson), 401

Mangamarama Creek,
h., *q.* (Mr. Hall), 622

MANTELL, Hon. W. B. D., *Wellington*,
 Foundation of the Colony, *m.* 387
 Railway Commissioners' Report, *q.* 1

Manure in Boroughs,
h., *q.* (Mr. Lawry), 498

Marlborough Railway-sleepers,
h., *q.* (Mr. Mills), 470

- MASLIN, Mr. W. S., Rangitata,**
 Arundel Village Settlement, *q.* 472
 Charges against the Police, *q.* 499
 Orari Money-order Office, *q.* 362
 Rangitata Settlers, *q.* 471
 Springburn Post-office, *q.* 180
 Supply, *m.* 385
- MASSEY, Mr. W. F., Waitemata,**
 Adjournment, *m.* 638
 Civil Service, *m.* 121
 Elective Executive Bill, 2*r.* 151
 Government Railways Bill, 2*r.* 600
 Inspection of Machinery Bill, 2*r.* 678
 Land for Settlements Bill, 3*r.* 90
 Onehunga Cemetery Bill, 2*r.* 23
 Rating of Crown Lands Bill, 2*r.* 612
 Rating on Unimproved Value Bill, 2*r.* 428
 Supply—
 Class XV., 247
 m., 339
- Master and Apprentice Bill (No. 2),*
h., 2*r.* 178
- McCullough, E. H.,**
h., *q.* (Mr. McGowan), 254
- MCCULLOUGH, Hon. W., Auckland,**
 Hamilton Domains Empowering Bill, 2*r.*
 353, 496; Com. 565; 3*r.* 618
 Middle District of New Zealand University
 College Bill, 2*r.* 11
 State Forests, *m.* 441
- McGOWAN, Mr. J., Thames,**
 Adjournment, *m.* 56, 490
 Cyanide Solution, *q.* 629
 Elective Executive Bill, 2*r.* 147
 Government Advances to Settlers Bill, 2*r.*
 712
 Kuatunu-Whangapoua Mail-service, *q.* 629
 McArthur-Forrest Cyanide Gold-extraction
 Process, *q.* 51
 McCullough, E. H., *q.* 254
 Mining Districts Land Occupation Bill, 2*r.*
 680
 Rating of Crown Lands Bill, 2*r.* 610
 Rating on Unimproved Value Bill, 2*r.* 424
 Supply, *m.* 327
 Tairua Land, *q.* 363
 Town Districts Bill, 2*r.* 548
 Whangapoua Ferry, *q.* 622
- MCGUIRE, Mr. F., Egmont,**
 Adjournment, *m.* 484, 635, 637, 680
 Bellamy's, Obs. 187
 Brown, Major C., *q.* 630
 Education Endowments, *q.* 456
 Gaming Bill, Com. 411
 Inglewood Stipendiary Magistrate's Court, *q.*
 52
 Inglewood-Tarata Road, *q.* 161
 Land for Settlements Bill, Com. 18; 3*r.* 71,
 87
 Leaseholders of Reserves, *q.* 364
 Licenses, *q.* 161
 New Plymouth Harbour, *m.* 367
 Rating of Native Land, *q.* 162
- MCGUIRE, Mr. F.—continued.**
 Rating on Unimproved Value Bill, 2*r.* 414;
 3*r.* 513
 Stratford Courthouse, *q.* 500
 Supply—
 Class IV., 243
 Class VIII., 376
 Com. 352
 m. 346
 Taranaki Courthouses, *q.* 157
- MCKENZIE, Mr. J., Waihemo (Minister of Lands**
 and Immigration, Minister of Agriculture,
 and Commissioner of Forests),
 Adjournment, *m.* 406
 Agricultural Department Leaflets, *q.* 456
 Arundel Village Settlement, *q.* 472
 Cattle ordered to be destroyed, *q.* 358
 Clement, J. R., *q.* 158
 Craig, W., *m.* 102, 104
 Dairy Expert, *q.* 159
 Dairy Factories and Creameries, *q.* 46
 Education Endowments, *q.* 456
 Fernhill Railway, *m.* 271, 272
 Flax, *q.* 680
 Forest Reserves, *q.* 475
 Frozen-meat Export, *q.* 8
 Fruit-growing, *q.* 400
 Gaming Bill, Com. 411
 Government Loans to Local Bodies, *q.* 364
 Inglewood-Tarata Road, *q.* 161
 Kawhia, *q.* 498
 Lake Forsyth Drainage Bill, 2*r.* 458, 460
 Land for Settlements Bill, Com. 8, 17; 3*r.*
 59, 95; *q.* 181
 Lease in Perpetuity, *q.* 181
 Leaseholders of Reserves, *q.* 364
 Little Barrier Island, *q.* 180
 Local Bodies "Thirds" and "Fourths," *q.*
 359, 363, 400
 Mangare Cemetery Trust Board, *q.* 160
 Mangaramarama Creek, *q.* 622
 Miller's Flat Punt, *q.* 160
 Mining Districts Land Occupation Bill, 2*r.*
 678, 683
 Ngaere and Other Blocks Native Claims
 Adjustment Bill, 2*r.* 460, 462
 Orouatamore Block, *q.* 621
 Otara-Six-mile Creek Roadwork, *q.* 159
 Rangitata Settlers, *q.* 472
 Rating on Unimproved Value Bill, 2*r.* 422
 Rotorua Leaseholders, *q.* 357
 Ruanui Block, *q.* 161
 Supply—
 Class II., 240, &c.
 Class X., 381, &c.
 Class XV., 246, &c.
 Class XVII., 248
 Class XVIII., 248
 Taranaki Cool-storage, *q.* 46
 Taranaki Rates, *q.* 664
 Tenants' Right Bill, *q.* 400
 Tuakau-Onewhero Punt, *q.* 46
 Waiau Block, *q.* 229
 Waikouaiti-Merton Road, *q.* 399
 Waiotapu-Taupo Road, *q.* 180
 Wellington City Drainage Empowering Bill,
 Com. 5
 Whangapoua Ferry, *q.* 622

- MCKENZIE, Mr. R., *Buller*,**
 Adjournment, *m.* 52, 58, 504, 645
 Civil Service, *q.* 120
 Elective Executive Bill, 2*a.* 130
 Government Railways Bill, 2*a.* 531
 Inspection of Machinery Bill, 2*a.* 677
 Lake Forsyth Drainage Bill, 2*a.* 459
 Little Wanganui Mail-service, *q.* 1
 Midland Railway, *q.* 48
 Mining Districts Land Occupation Bill, 2*a.* 683
 Rating of Crown Lands Bill, 2*a.* 611
 Rating on Unimproved Value Bill, 2*a.* 427
 Referendum Bill, 2*a.* 292
 Riverton Harbour Board Empowering Bill, Com. 32
 Supply—
 Class IV., 242
 Class VIII., 374
 Class IX., 381
 Class XIV., 250
 m. 815, 348
 Town Districts Bill, 2*a.* 549
 West Coast Water-race, *q.* 106
 Westport-Cardiff Coal Company, *m.* 384, 451
- MCLACHLAN, Mr. J., *Ashburton*,**
 Adjournment, *m.* 53, 185, 187
 Bill Office, *q.* 182
 Civil Service, *q.* 121
 Friedlander, Hermann, *m.* 179
 School-attendance Bill, 2*a.* 628
 Supply—
 Class VIII., 372, &c.
 m. 324
 Traction-engines, *q.* 230
- MCLEAN, Hon. W., *Otago*,**
 Borough of Oamaru Leasing Bill, 3*a.* 495
 Divorce and Matrimonial Causes Bill, Com. 99, 253
 Dunedin Loan Conversion Bill, Com. 444
 Hamilton Domains Empowering Bill, 3*a.* 617
 Harbours Bill, Com. 660, 661
 Middle District of New Zealand University College Bill, Com. 155
 Shipping and Seamen's Bill, 2*a.* 308
 Shops and Shop-assistants Bill, 2*a.* 396
- McNAB, Mr. R., *Mataura*,**
 Licensing Bill, *q.* 475; 2*a.* 653
 Otara-Six-mile Creek Roadwork, *q.* 159
 Rating of Crown Lands Bill, 2*a.* 612
 Riverton Harbour Board Empowering Bill, Com. 164
 Supply—
 Class VIII., 373
 Class XIII., 250
- MEREDITH, Mr. R., *Ashley*,**
 Adjournment, *m.* 56, 670
 Civil Service, *m.* 120
 Government Railways Bill, 2*a.* 582
 Rating on Unimproved Value Bill, Com. 486
 Rotorua Sanatorium Charges, *q.* 159
 School-attendance Bill, 2*a.* 625
 School-teachers, *q.* 3
- MEREDITH, Mr. R.—continued.**
 Supply—
 Class II., 240
 Class IV., 242, &c.
 Class VI., 246
 Class VII., 382
 Class VIII., 370, &c.
 Class XIII., 248
 m. 339
 Waiau-Kaikoura Mail-service, *q.* 184
- Middle District of New Zealand University College Bill,**
l.c., 1*a.* 1; 2*a.* 9; Com. 155, 177
- Midland Railway,**
h., *q.* (Mr. R. McKenzie), 48; *q.* (Captain Russell), 360
- Midland Railway Contract Bill,**
h., 1*a.* 620
- Miller's Flat Punt,**
h., *q.* (Mr. Larnach), 160
- MILLAR, Mr. J. A., *Chalmers*,**
 Adjournment, *m.* 475, 485
 Fernhill Railway, *q.* 364
 Government Advances to Settlers Bill, 2*a.* 707
 Inspection of Machinery Bill, 2*a.* 676
 Isbister's Unsinkable Ship, *q.* 364
 Local Bodies' Loans, *q.* 471, 567
 Shipping and Seamen's Bill, Com. 172, 173, 188
 Wellington City Drainage Empowering Bill, Com. 30
- MILLS, Mr. C. H., *Waimea-Sounds***
 Criminal Code Bill, Com. 658
 Fernhill Railway, *m.* 272
 Government Advances to Settlers Bill, 2*a.* 701
 Government Railways Bill, 2*a.* 595
 Imported Fruit, *q.* 663
 Land for Settlements Bill, 3*a.* 86
 Marlborough Railway-sleepers, *q.* 470
 Mining Districts Land Occupation Bill, 2*a.* 679
 "One Electorate One Representative," *q.* 364
 Oyster-culture and Fish-curing, *q.* 48
 Rating of Crown Lands Bill, 2*a.* 611
 Sleepers, *m.* 470
 Town Districts Bill, 2*a.* 546
 Vaile Railway System, *m.* 263
- Mining Companies Bill,**
h., 2*a.* 657
- Mining Districts Land Occupation Bill,**
h., 1*a.* 620; 2*a.* 678
- Ministerial Salaries and Allowances,**
h., *q.* (Mr. Mitchelson), 230
- MITCHELSON, Mr. E., *Eden*,**
 "Gallant Tip" Lease, *q.* 47; *m.* 101
 Government Railways Bill, 2*a.* 567
 Imprest Supply Bill (No. 3), Com. 313

MITCHELSON, Mr. E.—continued.

- Little Barrier Island, *q.* 180
 Mangare Cemetery Trust Board, *q.* 160
 Ministers' Salaries and Allowances, *q.* 230
 Ngaere and other Blocks Native Claims Adjustment Bill, 2*B.* 460
 Onehunga Cemetery Bill, 2*B.* 22
 Rating of Crown Lands Bill, 2*B.* 606
 Riverton Harbour Board Empowering Bill, Com. 32
 Rotorua Leaseholders, *q.* 357
 Supply—
 Class II., 240
 Class IV., 244
 Class V., 245
 Class VI., 246
 Westport-Cardiff Coal Company, *m.* 383, 384

Monday Sittings,

h., *m.* (Mr. Seddon), 187

MONTGOMERY, Hon. W., Canterbury (Member of Executive Council),

- Companies' Accounts Audit Bill, 2*B.* 13, 16
 Dairy Inspection, *q.* 304
 Hamilton Domains Empowering Bill, 3*B.* 617
 Harbours Bill, Com. 659; 3*B.* 661, 662
 Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Bill, Cons. of Amend. 39
 Labour Bills Committee, *m.* 440
 Land for Settlements Bill, 2*B.* 201, 224
 Riverton Harbour Board Empowering Bill, 2*B.* 469
 Shipping and Seamen's Bill, 2*B.* 304, 311

MONTGOMERY, Mr. W. H., Ellesmere,

- Agricultural Department Leaflets, *q.* 456
 Audit of Local Bodies' Accounts, *q.* 456
 Forest Reserves, *q.* 475
 Gebbie's Valley Telegraph, *q.* 629
 Government Railways Bill, 2*B.* 588
 Land for Settlements Bill, Com. 8
 Okain's Bay Postal Service, *q.* 629
 Supply—
 Class XIII., 249
 Class XIV., 251
m. 347

Moore, Robinson, and Hepburn,

h., *q.* (Sir R. Stout), 474

MORRIS, Hon. G. B., Auckland,

- Riverton Harbour Board Empowering Bill, 2*B.* 469

MORRISON, Mr. A., Caversham,

- Adjournment, *m.* 483
 Adulteration Prevention Bill, Com. 464
 Dunedin Public Abattoirs Bill, Com. 30
 Elective Executive Bill, 2*B.* 152
 Factories Bill, Com. 171
 Fernhill Railway, *m.* 271
 Government Railways Bill, 2*B.* 575
 Inspection of Machinery Bill, 2*B.* 678
 Inspector of Mines' Report, *q.* 288
 Supply—
 Class VIII., 372
m. 315

Mortgage-tax on Farmers,
h., *q.* (Mr. T. Mackenzie), 179

Mount St. John Reserve Bill,

h., 2*B.* and 3*B.* 198
l.c., 1*B.* 201; 2*B.* 353; 3*B.* 385

Municipal Petitions,

l.c., *m.* (Hon. Mr. Stevens), 36

N.**Napier Cemetery,**

h., *q.* (Mr. Carnell), 471

Native Lands Claims and Boundaries Adjustment and Titles Empowering Bill,

h., 1*B.* 497

Native Reserves Administration Bill,

h., *q.* (Mr. Willis), 185

Native Rights Bill,

h., 2*B.* 550

Natives not paying Dog-tax,

h., *q.* (Mr. W. Hutchison), 106

NEWMAN, Dr. A. K., Wellington,

- Adjournment, *m.* 480; *m.* 505
 Civil Service, *m.* 108
 Consolidated Fund, *m.* 269
 Emigration, *q.* 181
 Gisborne Harbour Bill, 2*B.* 196
 Government Advances to Settlers Bill, 2*B.* 695
 Government Advertisements, *q.* 107
 Government Railways Bill, 2*B.* 525
 Hawkers and Pedlars Bill, Com. 190
 Import Duty on Fruit, *q.* 180
 Jackman, Mr., *q.* 182
 Lake Forsyth Drainage Bill, 2*B.* 459
 Land for Settlements Bill, 3*B.* 85
 Kirikiri Native School Site Bill, 2*B.* 463
 Native Rights Bill, 2*B.* 559
 New Plymouth Harbour, *m.* 369
 New Zealand Loan, 1856, *q.* 49
 Night-watchmen and Messengers, *q.* 52
 Old Soldiers' Claims, *q.* 499
 Pitone, &c., Workshops, *q.* 358
 Porirua Cemetery, *q.* 179
 Rating of Crown Lands Bill, 2*B.* 607
 Rating on Unimproved Value Bill, 2*B.* 413
 Referendum Bill, 2*B.* 279
 Samoa, *q.* 49
 Supply—
 Class I., 245, &c.
 Class II., 237, &c.
 Class III., 242
 Class IV., 243
 Class V., 245
 Class VI., 246
 Class VII., 382
 Class VIII., 370, &c.
 Class X., 382
 Class XI., 382
 Class XII., 382
 Class XIII., 249

NEWMAN, Dr. A. K.—continued.**Supply—continued.**

Class XIV., 250

Class XV., 247

Class XVII., 247, &c.

Te Aro-Newton Railway, q. 664

Newmarket Hall Bill,

h., 3R. 193

l.c., 1R. 201; 2R. 466; 3R. 565

New Plymouth Harbour,

h., q. (Mr. E. M. Smith), 51, 361; m. (Mr. E. M. Smith), 365

New Zealand Company's Land-claimants Bill,

h., 1R. 254; 2R. 620; 3R. 629

l.c., 1R. 659

New Zealand Consols Bill,

h., 1R. 629

New Zealand Government Agency for Advances Bill,

h., q. (Major Steward), 157

New Zealand Loan, 1856,

h., q. (Dr. Newman), 49

Ngaere and other Blocks Native Claims Adjustment Bill,

h., 1R. 313; 2R. 461; 3R. 620

l.c., 1R. 629; 2R. 659

Night-watchmen and Messengers,

h., q. (Dr. Newman), 52

North Island Telegraph-line,

h., q. (Mr. E. M. Smith), 667

North of Auckland Unemployed,

h., q. (Mr. Thompson), 160

O.**Oaths Bill,**

h., 2R. and 3R. 178

l.c., 1R. 201; 2R. 252; Com. 565; 3R. 615

Ocean Beach Public Domain Bill,

h., Com. 31

l.c., 1R. 32; 2R. 174; 3R. 358

O'Halloran, J.,

h., q. (Mr. Duthie), 48

Okain's Bay Postal Service,

h., q. (Mr. Montgomery), 629

Old Soldiers' Claims,

h., q. (Dr. Newman), 499

OLIVER, Hon. R., Otago,

Companies' Accounts Audit Bill, 2R. 15

Divorce and Matrimonial Causes Bill, m. 100

Dunedin Loan Conversion Bill, 2R. 356

Equitable Insurance Company, Dunedin, q. 38; m. 35

OLIVER, Hon. R.—continued.

Hamilton Domains Empowering Bill, 3R. 618

Harbours Bill, 2R. 44; m. 154, 660; 3R. 662

Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Bill, m. 42

Labour Bills Committee, m. 440

Land for Settlements Bill, 2R. 206

Ocean Beach Public Domain Bill, 2R. 175

Shops and Shop-assistants Bill, 2R. 392

"One Electorate One Representative,"

h., q. (Mr. Mills), 364

Onehunga Cemetery Bill,

h., 2R. 4; Com. 20, 194

Orari Money-order Office,

h., q. (Mr. Maslin), 362

O'REGAN, Mr. P. J., Inangahua,

Addison's Flat, q. 665

Adjournment, m. 56, 186, 644

Charleston-Grey Valley Road, q. 368

Colonel Fox, q. 255

Elective Executive Bill, 2R. 145

Government Railways Bill, 2R. 597

Land for Settlements Bill, 3R. 84

Mining Districts Land Occupation Bill, 2R. 682

Rating on Unimproved Value Bill, 2R. 417, 425

Referendum Bill, 2R. 274, 300

Supply—

Class XIII., 249, 250

Class XIV., 251

m. 319

Wheat and Flour Duty, q. 255

ORMOND, Hon. J. D., Napier,

Greymouth Harbour Board Empowering Bill, 2R. 354

Shops and Shop-assistants Bill, 2R. 397

State Forests, m. 443.

Ormondville Police Accommodation,

h., q. (Mr. Hall), 400

O'ROKKE, Sir G. M., Kt., Manukau (Speaker, h.),

Government Railways Bill, Com. 646

Onehunga Cemetery Bill, Com. 20, 28

Oruatamore Block,

h., q. (Mr. Pere), 621

Otara-Six-mile Creek Roadwork,

h., q. (Mr. McNab), 159

Oyster-culture and Fish-curing,

h., q. (Mr. Mills), 48

P.**PARATA, Mr. T., Southern Maori,**

Ngaere and other Blocks Native Claims Adjustment Bill, 2R. 462

Rating on Unimproved Value Bill, 2R. 414

Supply—

Class VIII., 377

PARATA, Mr. T.—continued.

Waiau Block, q. 229
 Waikouaiti—Merton Road, q. 399
 Wairau Native Reserves, q. 474

**Pensions paid outside of the Colony,
 l.c., m. (Hon. Mr. Jennings), 99**

PERE, Mr. W., Eastern Maori,
 Oruatamore Block, q. 621
 Rating on Unimproved Value Bill, 2R. 415;
 Com. 488
 Referendum Bill, 2R. 298

**Personal Explanation,
 h. (Mr. Ward), 5; (Captain Russell), 545
 l.c. (Hon. Sir P. A. Buckley), 88**

PHARAZYN, Hon. R., Wellington,
 Companies' Accounts Audit Bill, 2R. 15
 Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Bill,
 m. 41, 43
 Land for Settlements Bill, 2R. 211
 Middle District of New Zealand University
 College Bill, 2R. 10, 12; m. 157
 Shipping and Seamen's Bill, 2R. 307
 Shops and Shop-assistants Bill, 2R. 394

**Photographs of "Prohibited" Persons,
 h., q. (Mr. Pirani), 51**

PINKERTON, Mr. D., City of Dunedin,
 Adjournment, 199
 Dunedin Loan Conversion Bill, 2R. 197
 Government Printing Office, q. 457
 Government Railways Bill, 2R. 591; Com.
 623, 624
 Shops and Shop-assistants Bill, Com. 188
 Supply—
 Class V., 245
 Class VIII., 379
 m. 350
 Tobacco Duty, q. 182

PIRANI, Mr. F., Palmerston,
 Adjournment, m. 410, 491, 506, 644, 670
 Amalgamation of Colonial Bank and Bank of
 New Zealand, q. 498
 Cattle ordered to be destroyed, q. 858
 Craig, W., m. 108
 Designation of Districts (No. 2) Bill, Com.
 465
 Elective Executive Bill, 2R. 150
 Factories Bill, Com. 172
 Government Railways Bill, 2R. 590
 Hawkers and Pedlars Bill, Com. 190
 Hange, A. G., q. 50
 Horowhenua Post-office, q. 499, 567
 Land for Settlements Bill, 3R. 59, 68
 Photographs of "Prohibited" Persons, q. 51
 Rating on Unimproved Value Bill, 2R. 414;
 3R. 510
 Referendum Bill, 2R. 292
 School-attendance Bill, 2R. 625
 Shops and Shop-assistants Bill, m. 235
 Supply—
 Class II., 238
 Class IV., 242, 243, 244
 Class VI., 246

PIRANI, Mr. F.—continued.

Supply—continued.
 Class XI., 282
 Class XIII., 248
 Class XIV., 251
 Class XV., 246, 247
 Government Insurance Account, 882
 m. 348
 Vaile Railway System, m. 256, 265
 Westport-Cardiff Coal Company, m. 884
 Williams, W., m. 157

**Piripi te Maari,
 h., q. (Sir R. Stout), 622****Pitons, &c., Workshops,
 h., q. (Dr. Newman), 358**

Pohangina County Bill,
 h., 3R. 1
 l.c., 1R. 9; 2R. 154; 3R. 173

**Police Merit-sheets,
 h., q. (Mr. Carncross), 184****Police Officers' Railway-passes,
 h., q. (Mr. G. W. Russell), 48****Police Uniforms,
 h., q. (Mr. G. J. Smith), 228**

POLLEN, Hon. D., Auckland,
 Foundation of the Colony, m. 385, 616
 Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Bill,
 m. 40
 Land for Settlements Bill, 2R. 205
 Shipping and Seamen's Bill, 2R. 306

**Porirua Cemetery,
 h., q. (Dr. Newman), 179****Postal Notes,
 h., q. (Mr. Lang), 358****Post Office Bill,
 h., 1R. 497****Public Reserves Sale Bill,
 h., 1R. 470****Public Works Bill,
 h., 1R. 398****Public Works Bill (No. 2),
 h., 2R. 447****Public Works Statement,
 h., q. (Captain Russell), 629****R.****Railway Commissioners' Report,
 l.c., q. (Hon. Mr. Mantell), 1****Railways,
 h., q. (Mr. Joyce), 107****Railway Union,
 h., q. (Mr. J. W. Kelly), 622**

Rangitata Settlers,
h., q. (Mr. Maslin), 471

Rangiwaea Block,
h., m. (Mr. Houston), 178

Rating Bill,
h., 2R. 178

Rating of Crown Lands Bill,
h., 2R. 606

Rating of Native Land,
h., q. (Mr. McGuire), 162

Rating on Unimproved Value Bill,
h., 2R. 191, 412; m. 463; Com. 486; 3R. 510
l.c., 1R. 565

Reciprocal Treaty with Canada,
h., q. (Mr. Joyce), 358

REEVES, Mr. W. P., *City of Christchurch*
(Minister of Education, Minister of Labour,
and Commissioner of Stamp Duties),
Adjournment, m. 199, 632, 672
Canterbury Industrial Hall and Technical
School, q. 4
Christchurch Unemployed, q. 280
Civil Service, m. 118
Education Report, q. 499
Elective Education Bodies, q. 401
Elective Executive Bill, 2R. 134
Factories Bill, Com. 169, 170, 172; 3R. 187
Female-refuge Work, q. 48
Hawkers and Pedlars Bill, Com., 189
Hikurangi Unemployed, q. 630, 632, 637, 672
Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Bill,
Cons. of Amend. 1
Kirikiri Native School Site Bill, 2R. 462
Land for Settlements Bill, 3R. 80
Lunatic Asylum Attendants, q. 497
Lyttelton Wharf Labourers, q. 3
Night-watchmen and Messengers, q. 52
North of Auckland Unemployed, q. 160
Onehunga Cemetery Bill, Com. 26.
Porirua Cemetery, q. 179
Referendum Bill, 2R. 288
Rotorua Sanatorium Charges, q. 160
School-attendance Bill, 2R. 628
School-teachers, q. 3
Shipping and Seamen's Bill, Com. 173, 188,
189; 3R. 281
Shops and Shop-assistants Bill, Com. 187,
m. 232, 233; 3R. 236
South Canterbury Schools, q. 456
Supply
Class VIII., 371, &c.
m. 336, 343
University Scholarships for Maoris, q. 458
Vaile Railway System, m. 263

Referendum Bill,
h., 2R. 274

REYNOLDS, Hon. W. H., *Otago*,
Equitable Insurance Company, Dunedin,
m. 85
Labour Bills Committee, m. 441

REYNOLDS, Hon. W. H.—*continued*.

Middle District of New Zealand University
College Bill, m. 156
Ocean Beach Public Domain Bill, 2R. 176
Riverton Harbour Board Empowering Bill,
2R. 447, 466, 468
Shops and Shop-assistant Bill, 2R. 388, 398

RICHARDSON, Hon. E., C.M.G., *Wellington*,
Hamilton Domains Empowering Bill, 3R. 617
Labour Bills Committee, m. 441
Ocean Beach Public Domain Bill, 2R. 175,
177
Riverton Harbour Board Empowering Bill,
2R. 445
Timaru Harbour District Rating Bill, 2R.
174

Rifle for Defence Forces,
h., q. (Mr. Buddo), 398

RIGG, Hon. J., *Wellington*,
Greymouth Harbour Board Empowering Bill,
2R. 355
Labour Bills Committee, m. 441
Land for Settlements Bill, 2R. 220
Municipal Petitions, m. 37
Riverton Harbour Board Empowering Bill,
2R. 467
Shops and Shop-assistants Bill, 2R. 393

Riverton Harbour Board Empowering Bill,
h., Com. 31; m. 162; Com. 164; 3R. 165, 198
l.c., 1R. 201; 2R. 444, 466

Robinson, Mr.,
h., q. (Sir R. Stout), 474

Rock-boring Machine,
h., q. (Mr. Guinness), 107

Rotorua Leaseholders,
h., q. (Mr. Mitchelson), 357

Rotorua Sanatorium Charges,
h., q. (Mr. Meredith), 159

Ruanui Block,
h., q. (Mr. Willis), 160

RUSSELL, Captain W. R., *Hawke's Bay*,
Adjournment, m. 491, 501, 508, 509, 641
Amalgamation of Colonial Bank and Bank
of New Zealand, q. 498
Bank of New Zealand and Colonial Bank,
Obs. 545
Civil Service, m. 108, 112
Factories Bill, Com. 171
Gaming Bill, m. 273
Government Advances to Settlers Bill, 2R.
697
Government Railways Bill, 2R. 521
Hastings Post and Telegraph Office, q. 566
Lake Forsyth Drainage Bill, 2R. 458
Land for Settlements Bill, Com. 7, 8; 3R. 60
Midland Railway, q. 360
Native Rights Bill, 2R. 560
New Business after Midnight, Obs. 470
Public Works Statement, q. 629

RUSSELL, Captain W. R.—continued.

Rating on Unimproved Value Bill, 2*r.* 431 ;
3*r.* 511

Riverton Harbour Board Empowering Bill,
3*r.* 166

Shops and Shop-assistants Bill, *m.* 284

Supply—

Class II., 237, 238

Class VIII., 370

Class XIII., 249

Class XIV., 250

m. 343

Vaile Railway System, *m.* 258

RUSSELL, Mr. G. W., Riccarton,

Adjournment, *m.* 54, 410, 476, 490

Amalgamation of Colonial and New Zealand
Banks, *q.* 399

Factories Bill, *Com.* 172

Female-refuge Work, *q.* 48

Government Railways Bill, 2*r.* 538 ; *Com.*
646

Inspection of Machinery Bill, 2*r.* 677

Land for Settlements Bill, *Com.* 7, 9, 18, 19 ;
3*r.* 74, 81

Lunatic Asylum Attendants, *q.* 497

Police Officers' Railway-passes, *q.* 48

Rating of Crown Lands Bill, 2*r.* 608

Referendum Bill, 2*r.* 286, 291

Supply,—

Class VIII., 372, 373, 377 &c.

Class IX., 381

Class X., 381

m. 341

Town Districts Bill, 2*r.* 547

Vaile Railway System, *m.* 260

Warlike Stores, *q.* 566

Westport-Cardiff Coal Company, *m.* 383,
447, 454

S.**Samoa,**

h., *q.* (Dr. Newman), 49

SAUNDERS, Mr. A., Selwyn,

Adjournment, *m.* 186

Elective Executive Bill, 2*r.* 131

Government Railways Bill, 2*r.* 537

Licensing Bill, 2*r.* 655

Referendum Bill, 2*r.* 277

Shops and Shop-assistants Bill, *m.* 284 ; 3*r.*
237

Supply—

Class II., 237

Class VIII., 371, 376 &c.

Com. 344

School-attendance Bill,

h., 2*r.* 625

School-books,

h., *q.* (Mr. Flatman), 107

School-teachers,

h., *q.* (Mr. E. M. Smith), 3

SEDDON, Mr. R. J., Westland (Premier, Minister for Public Works, Minister of Defence, and Minister of Native Affairs),

Addington Workshop Employés, *q.* 228

Addison's Flat, *q.* 665

Adjournment, *m.* 19, 32, 52 &c., 186, 198 &c.,
403, 479, 493, 506 &c., 636

Adulteration of Food, *q.* 473

Adulteration Prevention Bill, *Com.* 464

Alcoholic Liquors Sale Control Bill, *q.* 52

Arowhenua Destitute, *q.* 107

Bank of New Zealand and Colonial Bank,
Obs. 545

Bill Office, *q.* 183

Borough Boundaries, *q.* 51

Brown, Major C., *q.* 630

Cathro, W. N., *q.* 666

Charges against the Police, *q.* 499

Chinese, *q.* 499

Christchurch Supreme Court, *q.* 473

Civil Service, *m.* 108, &c.

Cook Islands, *q.* 399

Craig, W., Rep. Sel. *Com.* 102, &c.

Criminal Code Bill, *Com.* 658

Cyanide Solution, *q.* 629

Death of Tawhiao, *q.* 365

Defences, *q.* 229

Dunedin Loan Conversion Bill, 2*r.* 197

Eight Hours Bill, *q.* 472

Elective Executive Bill, 2*r.* 141

Emigration, *q.* 181

Encouraging Arts and Industries, *q.* 105

Eugene, "Medical Healer," *q.* 4

Featherston Courthouse, *q.* 500

Federation, *q.* 457

Fencing-lines between Europeans' and
Natives' Land, *q.* 365

Fernhill Railway, *q.* 364

Food and Drugs Imported, *q.* 566

Foundation of the Colony, *m.* 458

Fox, Colonel, *q.* 255

Gaming Bill, *Cons. of Amends.* 273 ; *Rep.*
Conf. 516

Gore-Kelso Railway, *q.* 631

Government Advertisements, *m.* 108 ; *q.* 398

Government Printing Office, *q.* 457

Government Railways Bill, 2*r.* 516, 580 &c.,
602 ; *Com.* 624 &c., 646 ; *q.* 666

Gravel-pits, *q.* 566

Grocer, South Dunedin, imprisoned, *q.* 473

Hawkers and Pedlars Bill, *Com.* 189

Hikurangi-Kawakawa Railway, *q.* 665

Imprest Supply Bill (No. 3), *m.* 313

Inspection of Boilers, *q.* 180

Inspection of Machinery Bill, 2*r.* 676

Isbister's Unsinkable Ship, *q.* 364

Kaikohe Native Licensing District, *q.* 474

Kettle, District Judge, *q.* 474

Land for Settlements Bill, 3*r.* 69

Licensing Bill, *q.* 475 ; 2*r.* 647, 656 ; *q.*
665

Local Bodies' Loans, *q.* 471 ; *q.* 567

Local Government, *q.* 181

Makohine Viaduct, *q.* 666

Manure in Boroughs, *q.* 498

Marlborough Railway-sleepers, *q.* 471

McCullough, E. H., *q.* 254

Midland Railway, *q.* 48 ; *q.* 360

Mining Companies Bill, 2*r.* 657

SEDDON, Mr. R. J.—continued.

Ministers' Salaries and Allowances, *q.* 280
 Monday's Sittings, *m.* 187
 Moore, Robinson, and Hepburn, *q.* 474
 Napier Cemetery, *q.* 471
 Natives not paying Dog-tax, *q.* 107
 Ngaere and other Blocks Native Claims Adjustment Bill, 2*a.* 460, &c.
 Old Soldiers' Claims, *q.* 499
 "One Electorate One Representative," *q.* 364
 Ormondville Police Accommodation, *q.* 400
 Oyster-culture and Fish-curing, *q.* 48
 Photographs of "Prohibited" Persons, *q.* 51
 Piripi te Maari, *q.* 622
 Pitone, &c., Workshops, *q.* 358
 Police Merit-sheets, *q.* 185
 Police Officers' Railway-passes, *q.* 48, &c.
 Police Uniforms, *q.* 228
 Public Works Statement, *q.* 629
 Railways, *q.* 107
 Railway Union, *q.* 622
 Rating of Crown Lands Bill, 2*a.* 607
 Rating on Unimproved Value Bill, 2*a.* 413, &c.; Com. 486
 Referendum Bill, 2*a.* 289
 Rifle for Defence Forces, *q.* 399
 Riverton Harbour Board Empowering Bill, Com. 164, &c.; 3*a.* 166, &c.
 Samoa, *q.* 49
 School-attendance Bill, 2*a.* 625
 School-books, *q.* 107
 Semi-political Meeting at Parliament Buildings, *q.* 106, 107
 Standing Orders, *q.* 45
 Stratford Courthouse, *q.* 501
 Supply—
 Class I., 245
 Class II., 237, &c.
 Class IV., 243, &c.
 Class VIII., 380
 Class XI., 382
 Class XII., 388
 Class XIII., 248, &c.
 Class XIV., 250, &c.
 Com. 318
 Taylor, E., and Another, *q.* 622
 Te Aro-Newtown Railway, *q.* 665
 Town Districts Bill, 2*a.* 546
 Traction-engines, *q.* 230, &c.
 Vaccination, *q.* 472
 Vaile Railway System, *m.* 256
 Volunteer Officers' Decoration, *q.* 473; *q.* 567
 Volunteers, *q.* 363
 Waipahi-Heriotburn Railway, *q.* 664
 Waipori Miners, *q.* 184
 Wairau Native Reserves, *q.* 474
 Waitaki North Railway-station, *q.* 47
 Wangamoa Accommodation-house, *q.* 49
 Warlike Stores, *q.* 566
 Wellington City Drainage Empowering Bill, Com. 5, 80
 Wellington Defences, *q.* 180
 Westport-Cardiff Coal Company, Rep. Sel. Com. 383, &c.; Rep. Sel. Com. 447, &c.

Semi-political Meeting at Parliament Buildings,

h., *q.* (Mr. E. M. Smith), 106, 107

Shipping and Seamen's Bill,

h., Com. 172, 188; 3*a.* 281
l.c., 1*a.* 201; 2*a.* 304

Shops and Shop-assistants Bill,

h., Com. 187; 3*a.* 236
l.c., 1*a.* 201; 2*a.* 387

SHEKINSKI, Hon. S. E., Otago,

Borough of Oamaru Leasing Bill, 3*a.* 495, &c.
 Companies' Accounts Audit Bill, 2*a.* 16; Com. 101
 Divorce Bill, Com. 444
 Equitable Insurance Company, Dunedin, *m.* 34, &c.
 Greymouth Harbour Board Empowering Bill, 2*a.* 354
 Hamilton Domain Empowering Bill, 2*a.* 496; Com. 565; 3*a.* 616, &c.
 Harbours Bill, Com. 660; 3*a.* 662; *m.* 663
 Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Bill, *m.* 43
 Labour Bills Committee, *m.* 440, &c.
 Middle District of New Zealand University College Bill, 2*a.* 10; Com. 157
 Municipal Petitions, *m.* 37
 Oaths Bill, 2*a.* 252
 Ocean Beach Public Domain Bill, 2*a.* 175
 Riverton Harbour Board Empowering Bill, 2*a.* 466
 Shipping and Seamen's Bill, 2*a.* 305
 Shops and Shop-assistants Bill, 2*a.* 338
 Timaru Harbour District Rating Bill, 2*a.* 174

Sleepers,

h., *m.* (Mr. Mills), 470; *m.* (Mr. G. J. Smith), 566

SMITH, Mr. E. M., New Plymouth,

Adjournment, *m.* 53; *m.* 634, &c.; *m.* 674
 Civil Service, *m.* 115
 Elective Executive Bill, 2*a.* 127
 Fernhill Railway, *m.* 272
 Flax, *q.* 630
 Government Advances to Settlers Bill, 2*a.* 706
 Government Railways Bill, 2*a.* 585
 Inspection of Machinery Bill, 2*a.* 677
 Native Rights Bill, 2*a.* 558
 New Plymouth Harbour, *q.* 51; *q.* 360; Com. 365, &c.
 North Island Telegraph-line, *q.* 667
 Onehunga Cemetery Bill, Com. 23
 School-teachers, *q.* 3
 Semi-political Meeting at Parliament Buildings, *q.* 106
 Supply—
 Class VIII., 376
 Class XII., 383
 Class XIV., 251
 Com. 315
 Taranaki Assessment, *q.* 566
 Taranaki Cool-storage, *q.* 46
 Taranaki Rates, *q.* 664
 Vaile Railway System, *m.* 264

SMITH, Mr. G. J., City of Christchurch,

Adjournment, *m.* 186; *m.* 477; *m.* 490

SMITH, Mr. G. J.—continued.

Alcoholic Liquors Sale Control Bill, *q.* 52
 Christchurch Unemployed, *q.* 229
 Defences, *q.* 229
 Dunedin Public Abattoirs Bill, Com. 31
 Government Railways Bill, 2*r.* 535
 Gravel-pits, *q.* 566
 Land for Settlements Bill, Com. 7; 3*r.* 65, 91
 Police Uniforms, *q.* 228
 Riverton Harbour Board Empowering Bill, 3*r.* 164; Com. 165; 3*r.* 167
 Shops and Shop-assistants Bill, *m.* 235
 Sleepers, *m.* 566
 Steam Service to Queensland, *q.* 862
 Supply—
 Class III., 242
 Class IV., 243
 Class VIII., 377, &c.
 Class XII., 388
 Class XIII., 248, &c.
 Class XIV., 251
 Class XVII., 248
 Taylor, E., and Another, *q.* 621

South Canterbury Schools,
h., *q.* (Major Steward), 456

SPEAKER, Hon. the, L.c. (Hon. H. J. Miller),
Otago,
 Divorce Bill, Obs. 444
 Equitable Insurance Company, Dunedin, *q.* 38, &c.
 Harbours Bill, Com. 660, &c.; 3*r.* 662
 Labour Bills Committee, *m.* 441
 Land for Settlements Bill, 2*r.* 220
 Middle District of New Zealand University College Bill, Com. 156
 Riverton Harbour Board Empowering Bill, 2*r.* 466, &c.

SPEAKER, Mr., h. (Sir G. M. O'Rorke, Kt.),
Manukau,
 Adjournment, *m.* 54, 185 &c., 489 &c., 509 &c.
 Bank of New Zealand and Colonial Bank, Obs. 545
 Bill Office, *q.* 183
 Brown, Major C., *q.* 630
 Count-out, Obs. 565
 Civil Service, *m.* 115
 Dairy Expert, *q.* 159
 Elective Executive Bill, 2*r.* 138; Obs. 154
 Eugene, "Medical Healer," *q.* 4
 Financial Debate, *q.* 3
 Government Railways Bill, 2*r.* 542, 597
 Hikurangi Workmen, *q.* 667
 Imprest Supply Bill (No. 3), *m.* 313
 Lake Forsyth Drainage Bill, 2*r.* 458, &c.
 Land for Settlements Bill, 3*r.* 59, 70 &c.
 New Business after Midnight, Obs. 470
 Ngaere and other Blocks Native Claims Adjustment Bill, 2*r.* 460
 Police Merit-sheets, *q.* 185
 Rating on Unimproved Value Bill, 3*r.* 510
 Shops and Shop-assistants Bill, 3*r.* 237
 Supply—
 Com. 317, 331 &c.
 Westport-Cardiff Coal Company, Rep. Sel. Com. 449, &c.

SPEAKER, ACTING (Mr. A. R. Guinness),
 Westport-Cardiff Coal Company, Rep. Sel. Com. 383, &c.

Springburn Post-office,
h., *q.* (Mr. Maslin), 180

Stamp Bill,
h., 1*r.* 546

Standing Orders,
h., *q.* (Major Steward), 45
l.c., *m.* (Hon. Mr. Feldwick), 353

State Forests,
l.c., *m.* (Hon. Mr. McCullough), 441

Steam Service to Queensland,
h., *q.* (Mr. G. J. Smith), 862

STEVENS, Hon. E. C. J., Canterbury,
 Borough of Oamaru Leasing Bill, 3*r.* 495, &c.
 Cheviot Estate, *q.* 36
 Companies' Accounts Audit Bill, 2*r.* 14, &c.
 Harbours Bill, 2*r.* 44; Com. 661; *m.* 663
 Land for Settlements Bill, 2*r.* 222
 Middle District of New Zealand University College Bill, Com. 177
 Municipal Petitions, *m.* 36, &c.
 Timaru Harbour District Rating Bill, 2*r.* 174

STEVENS, Mr. J., Rangitikei,
 Adjournment, *m.* 643
 Count-out, Obs. 565
 Dunedin Loan Conversion Bill, 2*r.* 356
 Feilding and Hunterville Post-offices, *q.* 255
 Government Advances to Settlers Bill, 2*r.* 709
 Makohine Viaduct, *q.* 666
 Native Rights Bill, 2*r.* 563
 Rating on Unimproved Value Bill, 2*r.* 435
 Referendum Bill, 2*r.* 299
 Supply—
 Class II., 241
 Class IV., 243, &c.
 Town Districts Bill, 2*r.* 549

STEWART, Major W. J., Waitaki,
 Adjournment, *m.* 186
 Awamoko Post-office, *q.* 359
 Clement, J. R., *q.* 158
 Dairy Factories and Creameries, *q.* 46
 Duntroon-Livingstone Telephone, *q.* 157
 Elective Executive Bill, 2*r.* 121, &c.
 Friedlander Hermann, Rep. Sel. Com. 179
 Government Railways Bill, Com. 646; *q.* 666
 Inspection of Machinery Bill, 2*r.* 677
 Local Bodies' Assessments Bill, *q.* 664
 New Zealand Government Agency for Advances Bill, *q.* 157
 South Canterbury Schools, *q.* 456
 Standing Orders, *q.* 45
 Supply—
 Class VIII., 374
 Vaile Railway System, *m.* 256
 Waimate Post-office, *q.* 49
 Waitaki North Railway-station, *q.* 47
 Wellington Defences, *q.* 180

STEWART, Hon. W. Downie, *Otago*,
 Borough of Oamaru Leasing Bill, 3r. 495
 Divorce and Matrimonial Causes Bill, Com.
 99, 253, 312
 Gisborne Harbour Bill, 2r. 620
 Hamilton Domains Empowering Bill, 2r.
 497; 3r. 617
 Harbours Bill, 2r. 660
 Oaths Bill, 2r. 252
 Ocean Beach Public Domain Bill, 2r. 176
 Shipping and Seamen's Bill, 2r. 308
 Shops and Shop-assistants Bill, 2r. 391

STOUT, Sir R., K.C.M.G., *City of Wellington*,
 Adjournment, m. 401 &c., 484, 638
 Civil Service, m. 108, &c.
 Designation of Districts (No. 2) Bill, Com.
 465
 Elective Executive Bill, 2r. 137, 145
 Factories Bill, Com. 170, &c.
 Gaming Bill, m. 411; Rep. Conf. 475
 Government Advances to Settlers Bill, 2r.
 702
 Government Advertisements, Obs. 182; q.
 398; m. 447
 Government Railways Bill, 2r. 527; Com.
 625
 Lake Forsyth Drainage Bill, 2r. 459
 Land for Settlements Bill, Com. 7; 3r. 67
 &c., 91
 Mining Companies Bill, 2r. 658
 Mining Districts Land Occupation Bill, 2r.
 680
 Moore, Robinson, and Hepburn, q. 474
 Native Rights Bill, 2r. 556
 Ngaere and other Blocks Native Claims Ad-
 justment Bill, 2r. 461
 Piripi te Maari, q. 622
 Railway Union, q. 623
 Rating of Crown Lands Bill, 2r. 609
 Rating on Unimproved Value Bill, 2r. 419,
 &c.; Com. 487
 Riverton Harbour Board Empowering Bill,
 Com. 31; 3r. 164, 165
 Temporary Clerks and Experts, m. 621
 Town Districts Bill, 2r. 548
 University Scholarships for Maoris, q. 457
 Wairarapa Hospital District Bill, Com. 30
 Westport-Cardiff Coal Company, Rep. Sel.
 Com. 448, &c.

Stratford Courthouse,
 h., q. (Mr. McGuire), 500

Supreme Court Bill,
 h., 1r. 497

Supreme Court Practice and Procedure Bill,
 h., 1r. 101; Disch. 470

Supply—
 h., Com. 313
 Class I., 245
 Class II., 237
 Class III., 242
 Class IV., 242
 Class V., 245
 Class VI., 246
 Class VII., 382

Supply—continued.

Class VIII., 370
 Class IX., 381
 Class X., 381
 Class XI., 382
 Class XII., 382
 Class XIII., 248
 Class XIV., 250
 Class XV., 246
 Class XVI., 247
 Class XVII., 247
 Class XVIII., 248
 Government Insurance Account, 382
 Public Trust Office Expenses Account, 382

SWANSON, Hon. W., *Auckland*,
 Shipping and Seamen's Bill, 2r. 307
 Shops and Shop-assistants Bill, 2r. 387

T.

Tairua Land,
 h., q. (Mr. McGowan), 363

TANNER, Mr. W., *Avon*,
 Adjournment, m. 57, 489, 644
 Hawkers and Pedlars Bill, Com. 190
 Inspection of Machinery Bill, 2r. 676
 Lake Forsyth Drainage Bill, Com. 488
 Land for Settlements Bill, 3r. 91
 Onehunga Cemetery Bill, Com. 26, 194
 Rating of Crown Lands Bill, 2r. 611
 Supply—
 Class II., 239, 240
 Class IV., 243
 Class VIII., 371, 380
 m. 329
 Westport-Cardiff Coal Company, m. 448

Taranaki Assessment,
 h., q. (Mr. E. M. Smith), 566

Taranaki Cool-storage,
 h., q. (Mr. E. M. Smith), 46

Taranaki Courthouses,
 h., m. (Mr. McGuire), 157

Taranaki Rates,
 h., q. (Mr. E. M. Smith), 664

Tariff Rates between Colonies,
 h., q. (Mr. G. Hutchison), 230

Tariff Treaty with Australia,
 h., q. (Mr. Joyce), 50

Taylor, Mr. E., and Another,
 h., q. (Mr. G. J. Smith), 621

Te Ao, Mr. R., *Western Maori*,
 Rangiwaia Block, m. 178

Te Aro-Newtown Railway,
 h., q. (Dr. Newman), 665

Telegraph Forms,
 l.c., q. (Hon. Mr. Bowen), 659

Telephone Exchange Ladies,
h., m. (Mr. Guinness), 108

Temporary Clerks and Experts,
h., m. (Sir R. Stout), 621

Tenants Rights Bill,
h., q. (Mr. Flatman), 400

THOMPSON, Mr. R., Marsden,
Adjournment, m. 478, 631, 641, 671
County Council Valuations, q. 457
Craig, W., Rep. Com. 101, 102, 105
Criminal Code Bill, Com. 658
Gaming Bill, m. 273
Hikurangi Unemployed, q. 690
Hikurangi Workmen, q. 667
Kirikiri Native School Site Bill, 2B. 463
Mangapai-Paroti Telephone, q. 401
New Plymouth Harbour, m. 369
North of Auckland Unemployed, q. 160
Onehunga Cemetery Bill, Com. 25
Rating of Crown Lands Bill, 2B. 606
Rating on Unimproved Value Bill, m. 513
Shipping and Seamen's Bill, Com. 172, 188
Shops and Shop-assistants Bill, m. 235
Supply—
Class II., 240
Class VIII., 373, 375, 378, &c.
Class XVII., 248
m. 321

Timaru Harbour District Rating Bill,
h., 3B. 20
l.c., 1B. 32; 2B. 173; 3B. 615

Timaru Harbour Reclamation Bill,
h., 3B. 20
l.c., 1B. 32; 2B. 173; 3B. 251

Tobacco Duty,
h., q. (Mr. Pinkerton), 182

Town Districts Bill,
h., 2B. 546; 3B. 550

Traction-engines,
h., q. (Mr. McLachlan), 230

Tuakau-Onewhero Punt,
h., q. (Mr. Lang), 46

U.

Unclaimed Land Bill,
h., 1B. 357

University Scholarships for Maoris,
h., q. (Sir R. Stout), 457

V.

Vaccination,
h., q. (Mr. Carnell), 472

Vaile Railway System,
h., m. (Mr. Pirani), 256

Volunteers,
h., q. (Major Harris), 363

Volunteer Officers' Decorations,
h., q. (Mr. Willis), 473, 567

W.

WAHAWAHA, Hon. R., Auckland,
Wharekahika - Raukokore Postal Service,
q. 32

Waiau Block,
h., q. 229

Waiau-Kaikoura Mail-service,
h., q. (Mr. Meredith), 184

Waikouaiti-Merton Road,
h., q. (Mr. Parata), 399

Waimakariri Water-supply Board Loan Bill,
h., 3B. 193
l.c., 1B. 201; 2B. 466; 3B. 565

Waimate Post-office,
h., q. (Major Steward), 49

Wairarapa Hospital District Bill,
h., Com. 30

Waiotapu-Taupo Road,
h., q. (Mr. W. Kelly), 180

Waipahi-Heriotburn Railway,
h., q. (Mr. Larnach), 664

Waipori Miners,
h., q. (Mr. Carncross), 184

Wairau Native Reserves,
h., q. (Mr. Parata), 474

Waitaki North Railway-station,
h., q. (Major Steward), 47

Wangamoa Accommodation-house,
h., q. (Mr. Graham), 49

WARD, Mr. J. G., Awarua (Colonial Treasurer,
Postmaster-General, Electric Telegraph
Commissioner, Minister of Commerce and
Industry, and Commissioner of Customs),
Adjournment, m. 199, 409, 508
Advances to Farmers and Graziers, q. 363
Amalgamation of Colonial Bank and Bank of
New Zealand, q. 498
Aotea Harbour, q. 46
Audit of Local Bodies' Accounts, q. 456
Awamoko Post-office, q. 359
Bank of New Zealand, q. 50
Brookside Post-office, q. 622
Cape Kidnappers Lighthouse, q. 472
Consolidation Loan, 1887, q. 49
"Corners," q. 399
Dargaville-Opunake Telegraph, q. 666
Designation of Districts Bill, Com. 465
Duntroon-Livingstone Telephone, q. 158

WARD, Mr. J. G.—continued.

- East Tamaki Post-office, q. 622
 Eketahuna Post and Telegraph Office, q. 621
 Exemption of Improvements from Taxation, q. 497
 Felling and Hunterville Post-offices, q. 255
 Financial Debate, q. 3
 Friendly Societies' Cheques, q. 51
 Gebbie's Valley Telegraph, q. 629
 Government Advances to Settlers Bill, 2a. 685
 Gisborne Harbour Bill, 2a. 195; Com. 198
 Hastings Post- and Telegraph-office, q. 500
 Herbertville-Wimbleton Mail, q. 622
 Horowhenua Telephone, q. 500; q. 587
 Hukerenui Telephone, q. 359
 Import Duties, q. 47
 Import Duty on Fruit, q. 180
 Import Duty on Wheat, q. 360
 Imported Fruit, q. 664
 Imprest Supply Bill (No. 3), m. 813
 Jackman, Mr., q. 182
 Kaihoke Telegraph, q. 358
 Kuaotunu-Whangapoua Mail-service, q. 629
 Little Wanganui Mail-service, q. 1
 Local Bodies' Assessments, q. 664
 Luggage Telephone, q. 500
 Mangapai-Paroti Telephone, q. 401
 Mortgage-tax on Farmers, q. 179
 Native Reserves Administration Bill, q. 185
 New Plymouth Harbour, q. 51; q. 360
 New Zealand Government Agency for Advances Bill, q. 157
 New Zealand Loan, 1856, q. 49
 North Island Telegraph-line, q. 667
 Okain's Bay Postal Service, q. 629
 Orari Money-order Office, q. 362
 Personal Explanation, q. 5
 Postal Notes, q. 358
 Rating of Crown Lands Bill, 2a. 606, 618
 Rating on Unimproved Value Bill, 2a. 191, 436; Com. 436; m. 510, 514
 Springburn Post-office, q. 180
 Steam Service to Queensland, q. 362
 Supply—
 Class II., 237, &c.
 Class III., 242
 Class V., 245
 Class VI., 246
 Class VII., 382
 m. 813, 822
 Taranaki Assessment, q. 566
 Tariff Rates between Colonies, q. 230
 Tariff Treaty with Australia, q. 50
 Telegraph Operators, q. 501
 Vaile Railway System, q. 260
 Waiata-Kaikoura Mail-service, q. 184
 Waimate Post-office, q. 49
 Wheat and Flour Duty, q. 255

Wharekahika-Raukokore Postal Service,
l.c., q. (Hon. Major Wahawaha), 82

Wheat and Flour Duty,
h., q. (Mr. O'Regan), 255

WHITMORE, Hon. Sir G. S., K.C.M.G., Hawke's Bay,
 Divorce and Matrimonial Causes Bill, Com.
 99, 253, 254

WHITMORE, Hon. Sir G. S.—continued.

- Equitable Insurance Company, Dunedin, q. 36
 Gisborne Harbour Bill, 2a. 619
 Harbours Bill, 3a. 662
 Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Bill, m. 40, 42
 Labour Bills Committee, m. 441
 Land for Settlements Bill, 2a. 210
 Legitimation Bill, Recom. 177, 178; 3a. 812
 Middle District of New Zealand University College Bill, Com. 155
 Ocean Beach Public Domain Bill, q. 175
 Riverton Harbour Board Empowering Bill, 2a. 445
 Shipping and Seamen's Bill, 2a. 310
 Shops and Shop-assistants Bill, 2a. 887

Wellington City Drainage Empowering Bill,
h., Com. 4, 30; 3a. 30
l.c., 1a. 32; 2a. 201; 3a. 251

Wellington Defences,
h., q. (Major Steward), 180

Wellington Reclaimed Land Bill,
h., 1a. 17; 2a. and 3a. 193
l.c., 1a. 201; 2a. 353; 3a. 385

West Coast Water-race,
h., q. (Mr. R. McKenzie), 106

Westland and Nelson Coalfields Administration Bill,
h., 1a. 497; 2a. 620; 3a. 629
l.c., 1a. 659

Westport-Cardiff Company,
h., Rep. Com. (Mr. G. W. Russell), 447

Whangapoua Ferry,
h., q. (Mr. McGowan), 622

Williams, W.,
h., m. (Mr. Pirani), 157

WILLIS, Mr. A. D., Wanganui,
 Adjournment, m. 489; m. 670
 Eugene, "Medical Healer," q. 4
 Government Railways Bill, 2a. 575
 Native Reserves Administration Bill, q. 185
 Rating on Unimproved Value Bill, 2a. 436
 Ruauui Block, q. 160
 Shops and Shop-assistants Bill, m. 235
 Supply—
 Class IV., 242
 Class VIII., 377
 Volunteer Officers Decoration, q. 473, 567

WILSON, Mr. J. G., Otaki,
 Government Railways Bill, 2a. 535
 Horowhenua Stipendiary Magistrate, q. 180
 Inspection of Machinery Bill, 2a. 676
 Licensing Bill, q. 665
 Supply—
 Class II., 239
 Class XV., 247
 Westport-Cardiff Coal Company, m. 454

NEW ZEALAND.

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES.

First Session of the Twelfth Parliament.

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

Thursday, 16th August, 1894.

First Readings—Second Reading—Railway Commissioners' Report.

The Hon. the SPEAKER took the chair at half-past two o'clock.

PRAYERS

FIRST READINGS.

Companies' Accounts Audit Bill, Middle District of New Zealand University College Bill.

SECOND READING.

Gaming Bill.

RAILWAY COMMISSIONERS' REPORT.

The Hon. Mr. MANTELL asked the Colonial Secretary, When the final report of the late Railway Commissioners will be laid upon the table?

The Hon. Sir P. A. BUCKLEY said the report would be laid on the table at as early a date as possible. It was, however, not quite ready yet.

The Council adjourned at ten minutes to three o'clock p.m.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.

Thursday, 16th August, 1894.

Third Readings—Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Bill—Little Wanganui Mail-service—Cruelty to Animals—School-teachers—Financial Debate—Frozen-meat Export—Lyttelton Wharf Labourers—Canterbury Industrial Hall and Technical School—Eugene, "Medical Healer"—Onehunga Cemetery Bill—Wellington City Drainage Empowering Bill—Personal Explanation—Land for Settlements Bill.

Mr. SPEAKER took the chair at half-past two o'clock.

PRAYERS.

THIRD READINGS.

Pohangina County Bill, Levels County Bill, Harbours Bill.

INDUSTRIAL CONCILIATION AND ARBITRATION BILL.

Mr. REEVES brought up the following reasons for disagreeing with the amendments made by the Legislative Council in this Bill, and moved, That the reasons be agreed to:—

"The amendment in clause 7 prevents industrial unions from holding more than an acre of land. There is no reason why such bodies should not invest their accumulated funds in land or lend them on mortgage, with the right of entering into possession should the mortgagor fail in repayment."

"The amendment in clause 86, enacting as it does that members of Boards to be constituted under the Act shall be paid, has the appearance of an interference with the public revenue, and, for that reason, the Committee trusts that the Legislative Council will not persevere with it. Moreover, it is not desirable that members of these Boards should be paid, as this would greatly increase the cost of settling industrial disputes. If, however, it were so desirable, the Chairmen of the Boards should certainly not be the only members unpaid, as the amendment seems to contemplate."

Motion agreed to.

LITTLE WANGANUI MAIL-SERVICE.

Mr. R. MCKENZIE asked the Postmaster-General,—(1.) If he will open a post-office at Little Wanganui, County of Buller? (2.) If he will make provision in this year's mail-contract for the subsidised mail-steamer from Westport to Karamea calling at Little Wanganui, delivering mails, goods, and passengers at that place?

Mr. WARD said, in reply to the first part of the question, it would depend upon whether it was practicable to arrange for the Karamea steamer to call at Little Wanganui. An alternative service embracing Little Wanganui was included in the new mail-service schedule.

CRUELTY TO ANIMALS.

Mr. DUTHIE asked the Minister of Justice, Whether his attention has been called to the apparently excessive sentences, of seven days' imprisonment, passed last Friday by the Wellington Stipendiary Magistrate on J. O'Halloran, and of a fine of £1 and costs on William Mudgeway, both being for working horses with sores on their shoulders; and whether he has observed the frequency with which convictions are being recorded in this Court for like acts, without evidence of neglect or cruelty beyond what is incidental and unavoidable in working horses? One of the parties who had been punished was a settler of over twenty years' residence here; he was a man of good character, and nothing besides this charge had been said against him. To be imprisoned for seven days was a degradation to him before the public and his family. He thought the punishment in this case was too severe. In Mudgeway's case, according to the evidence the horse was working with a sore upon its shoulder. Any one who had had experience of working horses was aware that sores upon the shoulders were very much the same as where a person who was not accustomed to manual labour got his hands blistered when doing such work. He might say that he had done some harvesting himself, and he had had his hands blistered in this way. In the case of a horse with a sore shoulder, the pain to the animal might be greatly alleviated by easing the padding of the collar, which had been done in this case. Some suffering in these cases could not be avoided; but it seemed to him that when it was shown that the sores were incidental to the working of the horse, and that means were taken to ease the animal, punishment, or, at any rate, severe punishment, should not be inflicted. He thought the matter was one which the Minister of Justice ought to inquire into.

Mr. CADMAN said perhaps the best answer he could give to this question would be by reading the Magistrate's report, which gave quite another version of the affair altogether. He said,—

“As no particulars are given as to the cases alluded to in the last part of the question, I cannot refer to them in detail, but can only state generally, but positively, that in no case have I ever convicted any person without evidence of actual cruelty beyond what is incidental and unavoidable in working horses. I should be very glad to know to what cases Mr. Duthie refers. With regard to the case of O'Halloran, the evidence showed that on the 2nd August instant O'Halloran, who was the owner of an express and horses, directed his man Long to take the express out with a certain horse. Long expostulated with O'Halloran, as the horse was not fit to put in harness. O'Halloran refused to let him take another horse, and ordered him to take the one in question. The poor beast could scarcely be got to travel, and Long took it to the police-station. I saw it, and found its back under the pad in a

frightful state on both sides—large sores, with matter running from them. O'Halloran had no excuse to offer except that, as he had to make up some payments to a loan company, he had to use the horse. In several cases that have been before me I have had reason to think that servants are often forced, at the risk of losing their situations, to use horses which are not in a fit state to work; and where it is proved to me that a master, having knowledge that his horse is in an unfit state, yet compels his servant to inflict unnecessary cruelty on the horse, I shall—unless there are exceptional circumstances attending the case—in case of conviction, punish the offender with imprisonment. In Mudgeway's case the facts were that Mudgeway, who was a driver employed by Mrs. Ritson, had on the 16th July last a four-horse team in Cambridge Terrace. The Inspector of the Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Animals noticed that one of the pole-horses was restless, and, on examining it, found under the collar two sores, each about the size of a shilling. The Inspector drew the driver's attention to the state of the horse, and the driver promised to take the horse out. He did not do so, but drove to Pitone, the drag being one of the football drags. The Inspector went to Pitone, and examined the horse there, and found that the two sores were bleeding. On the horse's return to town it was again examined, and the sores were found to be bleeding. The horse had a ‘chambered’ collar on, so that some attempt had been made to save the infliction of pain, but, as the driver's attention had been called to the fact of the sores before he left town, I fined him 20s. and costs. Since writing the above, I have seen Mr. Smith, the Inspector of the society, and have asked him if he can suggest any cases to which the last part of the question applies, but he is unable to do so.—J. C. MARTIN, S.M.”

Considering the circumstances, he quite approved of the Magistrate's action in this case; but he thought also the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals should extend its field a little, and look to the overloading of horses. It was a common thing to see a horse with a load behind him which might be easily dragged along a level road, but which certainly the horse was unfit to drag up the hills in Wellington, and yet horses were made to do so. Only yesterday, just outside his own lodgings, on the level road, he saw a small horse, which was only fit for a hack, in a four-wheeled vehicle loaded with gravel, and there were two men flogging the horse most unmercifully. The horse was a staunch animal, but was utterly unable to pull the load. He would only repeat that he certainly approved the action of the Magistrate in this case.

Mr. DUTHIE would like to say, with the leave of the House, that in Mudgeway's case it was admitted that the collar was “chambered” to relieve the animal; and he thought, under the circumstances the punishment in both cases was too severe.

SCHOOL-TEACHERS.

Mr. E. M. SMITH asked the Minister of Education, As he has stated that the Education Boards are paid their capitation on the working average and not on the strict average, and as the Education Boards do not pay the school-teachers on the same system, will he so amend the law as to compel the Education Boards to pay the school-teachers also on the working average?

Mr. REEVES said the only way to deal with this matter would be to establish a proper system of classification. He would be very glad, when opportunity offered, to submit to the Cabinet the propriety of doing that.

Mr. MEREDITH said the question asked by the honourable member for New Plymouth was not founded on fact. As a member of the North Canterbury Board of Education, he might say that they had been paying their teachers on the full capitation allowance of the working-average attendance.

Mr. E. M. SMITH said he did not allude to the honourable member's district.

FINANCIAL DEBATE.

Mr. W. HUTCHISON asked the Colonial Treasurer, If he has noticed that the Press Association report of his reply on the financial debate omits all reference to the statement he made—namely, that the leader of the Opposition had publicly advocated the colony borrowing twenty millions at 5 per cent. and lending same at 6 per cent. for the purpose of paying off private mortgages? Did members misunderstand or mistake the Treasurer's meaning on this subject? This question opened up a subject of very considerable importance. It referred to the particular position which the Press Agency took up in reference to the circulation of news, and generally speaking as to its one-sidedness against the present Government and the popular party; but in the present instance he had to stand up for the honourable member for Hawke's Bay, who belonged to the other side.

Mr. SPEAKER said he had not heard the question read when notice was given of it, but it seemed to him to be hardly a proper question to put, because it reopened to a certain extent and referred to a debate which had been closed.

Mr. W. HUTCHISON said he would not say a word which was debatable.

Mr. SPEAKER said it was the nature of the question itself which he alluded to; but, if the Treasurer had no objection to answer, he would allow the question to pass: but it must not be regarded as a precedent for future questions.

Mr. W. HUTCHISON thought the honourable member for Hawke's Bay should not be deprived of the credit of one of the most heroic financial proposals which had been made to the New Zealand Parliament.

Mr. WARD said he had noticed that no report of the statement which he had made on this matter had appeared in the Press Association's report.

He desired to say that there was no misunderstanding or mistake so far as he himself was concerned. He had quoted from a speech delivered by the honourable member in which he advocated the borrowing of £20,000,000 at 5 per cent., and the lending it at 6 per cent. to pay off private mortgages in New Zealand.

Captain RUSSELL asked if the honourable gentleman would kindly reply to the last part of the question.

Mr. WARD said he had done so.

Captain RUSSELL said the question was as to how members understood the Treasurer's remarks.

Mr. WARD said he was not responsible for the understanding of honourable members, but he thought the honourable member for Hawke's Bay fully understood it upon the occasion in question: at any rate, he looked as if he did.

FROZEN-MEAT EXPORT.

Mr. W. HUTCHISON asked the Minister of Lands, If he will suggest to the Agent-General the advisability of making inquiry as to the possible opening of places of cool-storage in Paris, Berlin, Vienna, and other great populous centres, so as, if found practicable, to extend our shipments of meat, &c., beyond the British market?

Mr. J. MCKENZIE might say that this matter had already been before the Government, and a few weeks ago full instructions had been sent to the Government agent at Home to if possible, bring about the opening of new markets for New Zealand produce.

LYTTELTON WHARF LABOURERS.

Mr. JOYCE asked the Minister of Labour, If he will devise some means whereby the complaints and grievances of the labouring-men employed on the Lyttelton wharves may be correctly communicated to him and the Cabinet?

Mr. REEVES said, should he be so fortunate as to survive the present session he would have the greatest pleasure on his next visit to Canterbury in meeting any deputation which might wait upon him. If the men did not care to wait upon him themselves, any respectable citizen, with a knowledge of the circumstances, and who cared to call upon him, might do so, and he would be ready to listen to any representations which he might make to him, or, if any of these people signed their names to a letter stating the circumstances, and could vouch for their correctness, they would find him ready to inquire into them.

CANTEBURY INDUSTRIAL HALL AND TECHNICAL SCHOOL.

Mr. JOYCE asked the Minister of Education, Will the Government favourably entertain an application from the industrial and artisan classes of Canterbury for a sum of money to be placed upon the supplementary estimates to purchase a site, and for the erection thereon of an Industrial Hall and Technical School of Education?

Mr. REEVES said if any application was made to him from Canterbury he would be very glad to bring it before the Cabinet.

EUGENE, "MEDICAL HEALER."

Mr. WILLIS asked the Premier, Whether he will make inquiries as to the sanity and antecedents of a so-called medical healer named Eugene, who has been the means of persuading a number of weak-minded people to dispose of their property and to leave the colony, by prophesying its total destruction on a certain date? He had reason to know that a large number of people in Wellington had been made the dupes of this man Eugene. In consequence of this, a large number of them had been selling their property and furniture with the intention of leaving the colony. He had received a letter on the subject, but he would not read it because it was of a private nature. It was a letter from one of these dupes, who had written to his employer and stated that he was compelled to go, and that he was quite satisfied this man Eugene was right.

An Hon. MEMBER.—Eugene who?

Mr. WILLIS did not know and did not care. It amounted to this: that a large number of people had been deceived by this man; and he understood they were leaving in a few days for South Africa, believing Wellington was going to be destroyed. He might remark that it was not so long ago that a woman was punished for practising the art of palmistry, and for making a trumped-up charge of some half a crown. If it was right to punish the person in that case, would it not be far more right to punish a man who had been the cause of breaking up families and doing such a large amount of injury? He thought that the Government should interfere in this case.

3.0. Mr. SPEAKER said the honourable gentleman must not introduce debatable matter.

Mr. WILLIS said it had been asserted that the people in Wanganui were in the habit of sending lunatics to Wellington—

Mr. SPEAKER thought that was clearly a question which might be open to debate.

Mr. WILLIS did not think it was now open to debate, for Wellington was provided with a sufficient number of their own, as was evidenced by the number of dupes this man Eugene had secured; so that they need not send any more here.

Mr. SEDDON was surprised that honourable members should treat this important matter with levity. As far as he could up to the present time ascertain, this person named Eugene was originally a bookmaker. The totalisator having, no doubt, prevented his following that vocation to advantage, he had become a "faith healer" and a prophet, and he had given a number of unfortunate people "the straight tip"—that tip being that there was to be a second Flood and earthquake and a "tidal wave"; and there were, he was sorry to say, some people—and not from Wanganui—who really believed the man. It had been suggested to him, in all seriousness, whether or not some

accommodation should be provided on the top of Tongariro, so that, in case of this flood occurring, the people might fly to it. Others spoke about building an ark and taking other measures for safety. But there was no doubt there were people who were going away because of the predictions of this man, and some spot had been selected where the results would not be so great. He believed the place selected was somewhere in South Africa, and they were going there on to some very high land, where they would be safe. He thought the honourable member was quite right in bringing this matter forward, and he would say that he would put the police on the track of Eugene, for if he had violated the law it was right that he should be brought to book. It was a very serious matter to have this kind of thing going on. At this time, in the nineteenth century, one could scarcely credit that any sane person would believe such arrant nonsense, but they had proof that there were people who were selling out and fleeing from this foretold destruction. He did not know for certain, but the people who were going, he understood, were people with capital, and it had been suggested, though he could not say it was so, that this was a ruse on the part of those who, having been unable to frighten capital away from the country, were taking this other way of doing it. Well, the Government objected to capital leaving New Zealand.

ONEHUNGA CEMETERY BILL.

The House divided on the question, "That this Bill be read a second time."

AYES, 43.

Bell	Lang	Parata
Buchanan	Larnach	Pirani
Carncross	Mackintosh	Russell, G. W.
Carnell	Maslin	Seddon
Carroll	McGowan	Smith, E. M.
Collins	McKenzie, J.	Smith, G. J.
Crowther	McKenzie, R.	Stevens
Duthie	McLachlan	Steward
Graham	McNab	Ward
Hall-Jones	Meredith	Willis
Harris	Miller	Wilson.
Hogg	Mills	
Houston	Montgomery	<i>Tellers.</i>
Hutchison, W.	Morrison	Guinness
Joyce	O'Regan	Lawry.

NOES, 10.

Allen	Kelly, J. W.	<i>Tellers.</i>
Duncan	Pinkerton	Newman
Earnshaw	Stout	Tanner.
Hall	Thompson.	

Majority for, 33.

Bill read a second time.

WELLINGTON CITY DRAINAGE EMPOWERING BILL.

IN COMMITTEE.

Clause 6.—"Every sum of money payable by an owner of any premises under or by virtue of any provision of this Act hereinbefore or hereinafter contained for or in respect of any work,

materials, or things executed, provided, or done by the Council in pursuance of this Act, or of any by-law made hereunder, may be divided into instalments extending over ten years, with interest at the rate of six per centum per annum added; and each such instalment shall be recoverable in like manner in every respect as if it were a general rate of the city duly made in respect of the premises in question under the statutory provisions under which the general rate of the city should for the time being be made."

Mr. SEDDON moved to strike out the word "six" in the words "six per centum," with a view to inserting the word "five."

The Committee divided on the question, "That the word proposed to be omitted stand part of the clause."

AYES, 27.

Bell	McGowan	Russell, W. R.
Crowther	McGuire	Smith, G. J.
Duthie	McKenzie, R.	Stout
Earnshaw	Millar	Tanner
Fraser	Mitchelson	Willis
Lang	Montgomery	Wilson.
Lawry	Pinkerton	<i>Tellers.</i>
Mackenzie, T.	Pirani	Allen
Maslin	Reeves	Buchanan.
Massey		

NOES, 29.

Buddo	Harris	Morrison
Buick	Hutchison, W.	Newman
Cadman	Joyce	O'Regan
Carnell	Kelly, J. W.	Parata
Carroll	Mackintosh	Seddon
Duncan	McKenzie, J.	Smith, E. M.
Flatman	McLachlan	Ward.
Graham	McNab	<i>Tellers.</i>
Hall	Meredith	Collins
Hall-Jones	Mills	Hogg.

For. PAIR.

Green.

Against.

Stevens.

Majority against, 2.

Word "six" struck out, and "five" inserted in lieu thereof.

Mr. J. MCKENZIE moved, That progress be reported.

The Committee divided on the question, "That progress be reported."

AYES, 11.

Cadman	Mackintosh	Ward.
Duncan	McKenzie, J.	<i>Tellers.</i>
Harris	Millar	Mills
Hogg	Seddon	Morrison.

NOES, 42.

Allen	Flatman	Massey
Bell	Fraser	McGowan
Buddo	Graham	McKenzie, R.
Buick	Hall-Jones	McLachlan
Carncross	Heke	McNab
Carnell	Joyce	Meredith
Collins	Lang	Mitchelson
Crowther	Larnach	Montgomery
Duthie	Mackenzie, T.	Newman
Earnshaw	Maslin	O'Regan

Pere	Steward	Willis.
Pinkerton	Stout	<i>Tellers.</i>
Pirani	Tanner	Buchanan
Russell, W. R.	Thompson	Wilson.
Smith, G. J.		

Majority against, 31.

Motion negatived.

Progress subsequently reported.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION.

7.30. Mr. WARD.—Sir, I desire to make a personal statement to the House, and in doing so I feel that I owe an apology to honourable members for occupying their attention with a matter which is trivial and, indeed, contemptible. But, Sir, as the integrity of a Minister of the Crown possessing the confidence of this House is concerned, I do not choose to entirely allow the matter to pass without notice. Honourable members will be prepared to hear that I refer to myself in connection with the insinuations conveyed by a newspaper in this town, to the effect that the motives for my public action want looking to. It is true, Sir, that the paper in question is not an influential one. It is equally true that it is not largely read. But it is owned partly by some of the leading members on the Opposition benches; and I should like at once to say that a gentleman whom I highly esteem, and who occupies a seat on the Opposition benches, Mr. H. D. Bell, was kind enough to tell me personally that he had no sympathy with such articles, and that, in fact, he disapproved of them. Upon the directorate of the paper there is an officer occupying a high position in the employment of one of the foreign banks. Now, since the statements to which I allude appeared in that paper, I have made inquiries as to who the editor of the paper is, and I am glad to be able to tell the House that I believe him to be a most honourable and straightforward man, and one who, I believe, would not willingly do any member of this House, or any one outside of it, an injustice. I therefore assume, Sir, that the articles to which I allude have been inspired, and particularly the one to which I am now referring. I am not going to copy the example set me of imputing unworthy motives—I will assume that those who inspired the articles are actuated by patriotic motives; but I think that my friends in this House—of whom, I am very glad to say, I have a number, even amongst my political opponents—and, indeed, any generous-minded gentleman, will agree with me that such insinuations ought not to be made without some ground for them, and that something wrong in the public conduct of a servant of the Crown should first be proved, or, at least, there should be the gravest cause for suspicion shown, before corrupt or unworthy motives are suggested. Now, Sir, it is quite true that in recent banking legislation the duties attaching to my office made it incumbent upon me to introduce in this House a certain Bill: but that Bill had been previously agreed to by my colleagues. It met with the unanimous approval of this House, and it has further practically received the

unanimous, or almost unanimous, indorsement of the country. While the highly important question involved was yet unsettled, no one in this House ventured to take the responsibility of directly opposing what was done. I think members on both sides of the House will agree with me in saying that it was but natural, and, in the ordinary course of things, inevitable, that political capital should ultimately be attempted to be made out of it; but that it should be made the occasion for personal malice, I, Sir, was not prepared, nor do I think any right-thinking man in or outside of this House was prepared for it. Now, as honourable members know, I am a business-man. I have not been an idler in this country, and I think I may fairly claim that I have helped to develop its industries as much as any other single individual in the colony has done. The firm to which I am attached, I am glad to say, ranks in the first position with businesses in this colony. I have myself been singularly successful in business. From time to time I have had, as a business-man, to make my banking arrangements, and I have always made them in my own way, and carried them out properly, with satisfaction to myself and with profit to my banker. Let me say, Sir, that there is no such thing as compliment in connection with this matter. Whatever I have agreed to do in this respect I have agreed to pay for, and, that being so, I think I can in the ordinary course of things treat with contempt such insinuations as have been made. There is, however, something more underlying them. It fortunately happens, Sir, that, as regards the Bank of New Zealand, I am not indebted nor is the business with which I am associated indebted to it. I am not in any way personally concerned in the bank otherwise than as a colonist, and as one who has a considerable stake in the financial stability of this country. Sir, I wish to say here that I feel there was no call upon me to say even so much as I have said. But I wish now to say specifically that I shall in the future disdain to notice any such paltry insinuations—particularly when one knows the source from which they emanate—which are discreditable only to those making them. I shall further take leave to conduct my private business with whom I please and as I please, feeling sure that my friends will believe that it is honestly conducted. As for my public action, I would say that is a legitimate matter for public criticism. But I confidently reckon on the sympathy of the House when I represent that, until something personally improper, or at least suspicious, is shown in my public conduct, my private affairs are not a fit subject for public comment, any more than the private affairs of other members of the House. I simply wish to say, in conclusion, that, if these people who, in my opinion, are not in a straightforward way making these insinatory attacks upon myself, think it is a manly or a proper course for them to follow, they are quite at liberty to do so. I now simply wish to say before this House that I have a remedy.

Mr. Ward

That remedy is not to go to a newspaper and there cover up my identity, but it is to take an opportunity in this House, and at a fit and proper time, to make such statements as I think proper; and, having made those statements, I shall be prepared to go outside on to the public platforms in this colony and reiterate them. That is a fair and straightforward way to do it; and a man occupying a public position in this colony, who has had a most onerous, difficult, and arduous task to perform, such as no member of this House, and myself among the number, would willingly undertake, and who has to the best of his ability done what he thought best in the interests of the colony, to then find himself subjected to these uncalled-for, improper, ungenerous, and ungentlemanly attacks, is not, I say, a position in which any honourable member should be placed. But, if he does find himself placed in such a position, it is then his business to come here in a straightforward manner and tell the House and the country what his feelings are upon the matter, and ask honourable members to sympathize with him in the uncalled-for position in which he finds himself placed.

Mr. BELL.—I also desire the indulgence of the House to be permitted to make a personal statement. I have some little difficulty in doing so because I must not refer to a previous debate. But, without infringing that rule, I may say it was suggested by the honourable member for Parnell the other day that I was proprietor and had direction of the newspaper to which the honourable gentleman has just referred. Of that I took no notice at the time, because I thought it was not a matter which interested the House at all; but, as these articles have been published, I desire now, with the permission of the House, to state that I am not and never was in any way concerned with the direction of that newspaper. Neither under its former state nor under its present condition have I ever suggested, either directly or indirectly, or been consulted as to, any article or paragraph or anything else that has ever appeared in that paper. I am simply a shareholder, and not a very large shareholder at that. I have certain moneys, I may add, which have been lent, and which stand in my name as trustee, but in no respect have I ever had anything direct or indirect to do with the management of the paper, or any connection with those who are responsible for it. I desire to add that I, personally, entirely agree with what the honourable gentleman has said about the article concerning himself. I should be most inconsistent if I did not hold that opinion, for I have held it with regard to similar accusations which a predecessor in office of the honourable gentleman was subjected to. I repeat that, so far from having any sympathy with that kind of underhand personal attack and reference to the personal affairs of the honourable gentleman,—whether as a member of the House or as a member of the Government,—I have no sympathy with it, and I denounce it in as strong language as the honourable gentleman has done.

LAND FOR SETTLEMENTS BILL. IN COMMITTEE.

Clause 3.—Land Purchase Commissioners appointed.

Mr. G. J. SMITH moved to strike out the words "the member of the House of Representatives for the time being of the electoral district."

The Committee divided on the question, "That the words proposed to be omitted stand part of the clause."

AYES, 32.

Buddo	Larnach	Parata
Buick	Lawry	Pinkerton
Cadman	Mackenzie, T.	Reeves
Carnell	Mackintosh	Seddon
Carroll	Maslin	Stevens
Collins	McGowan	Steward
Duncan	McKenzie, J.	Tanner
Flatman	McLachlan	Ward.
Hutchison, W.	Meredith	<i>Tellers.</i>
Joyce	Mills	McKenzie, R.
Kelly, W.	Morrison	Smith, E. M.

NOES, 33.

Bell	Harris	Pirani
Buchanan	Heke	Russell, G. W.
Button	Hogg	Russell, W. R.
Carncross	Kelly, J. W.	Smith, G. J.
Crowther	Lang	Stout
Duthie	McGuire	Te Ao
Earnshaw	McNab	Thompson
Fraser	Mitchelson	Wilson.
Graham	Montgomery	<i>Tellers.</i>
Green	Newman	Allen
Hall	O'Regan	Massey.
Hall-Jones		

Majority against, 1.

Amendment agreed to, and words struck out.

Sir R. STOUT moved to strike out the words "and the Chairman of the county."

The Committee divided on the question, "That the words proposed to be omitted stand part of the clause."

AYES, 26.

Allen	Kelly, W.	Pirani
Bell	Lang	Russell, W. R.
Buchanan	Mackenzie, T.	Stevens
Cadman	Massey	Tanner
Carncross	McGowan	Thompson
Crowther	McKenzie, J.	Ward.
Duthie	McNab	<i>Tellers.</i>
Green	Mitchelson	Newman
Houston	Montgomery	Wilson.

NOES, 32.

Buddo	Joyce	Pinkerton
Buick	Kelly, J. W.	Reeves
Carnell	Larnach	Russell, G. W.
Carroll	Lawry	Seddon
Collins	Maslin	Smith, E. M.
Flatman	McKenzie, R.	Smith, G. J.
Graham	McLachlan	Steward
Hall	Meredith	Stout.
Hall-Jones	Mills	<i>Tellers.</i>
Harris	Morrison	Duncan
Hogg	Parata	Earnshaw.

Majority against, 6.

Amendment agreed to, and words struck out.

The words, "or, in the event of the Counties Act not being in operation, the Chairman of the road district," inserted by the Waste Lands Committee, were struck out.

Clause 4.—Minister may direct Board to acquire lands for settlement by purchase or exchange.

Mr. G. W. RUSSELL moved the addition of the following new subsection after subsection (1):—

"For the acquisition of land suitable for homesteads contiguous to boroughs or town districts."

The Committee divided on the question, "That the subsection be added to the clause."

AYES, 13.

Allen	McGuire	Tanner.
Bell	Newman	
Earnshaw	Pirani	<i>Tellers.</i>
Heke	Smith, G. J.	Hall-Jones
Joyce	Stout	Russell, G. W.

NOES, 47.

Buddo	Hutchison, W.	Montgomery
Buick	Kelly, J. W.	Morrison
Cadman	Kelly, W.	O'Regan
Carncross	Lang	Parata
Carnell	Larnach	Reeves
Carroll	Lawry	Russell, W. R.
Collins	Mackintosh	Seddon
Crowther	Maslin	Smith, E. M.
Duncan	Massey	Stevens
Flatman	McGowan	Thompson
Graham	McKenzie, J.	Ward
Green	McKenzie, R.	Willis
Hall	McLachlan	Wilson.
Harris	McNab	<i>Tellers.</i>
Hogg	Meredith	Mitchelson
Houston	Mills	Pinkerton.

Majority against, 34.

Amendment negatived.

Clause 6.—Limitation.

Captain RUSSELL moved the addition of the following subsection:—

"Where an owner of land has children born in lawful wedlock, the areas limited by subsections one and two hereof shall be increased as follows, that is to say: Of first-class land, an additional area of five hundred acres for each such child; of second-class land, an additional area of one thousand acres for each such child; and of pastoral land, an additional area of two thousand acres for each such child."

The Committee divided on the question, "That the subsection be added to the clause."

AYES, 15.

Allen	Maslin	Thompson
Buchanan	Massey	Wilson.
Crowther	McGuire	<i>Tellers.</i>
Heke	Russell, W. R.	Fraser
Kelly, W.	Stout	Green.
Lang		

NOES, 43.

Buddo	Carncross	Collins
Buick	Carnell	Duncan
Cadman	Carroll	Earnshaw

Flatman	McKenzie, J.	Reeves
Graham	McKenzie, R.	Russell, G. W.
Hall	McLachlan	Seddon
Hall-Jones	McNab	Smith, E. M.
Hogg	Meredith	Smith, G. J.
Houston	Mills	Stevens
Hutchison, W.	Morrison	Tanner
Joyce	Newman	Willis.
Larnach	O'Regan	
Lawry	Parata	<i>Tellers.</i>
Mackintosh	Pinkerton	Harris
McGowan	Pirani	Montgomery.

PAIRS.

<i>For.</i>	<i>Against.</i>
Button	Saunders
Duthie.	Steward.

Majority against, 28.

Amendment negatived.

Mr. BELL moved the addition of the following subsection:—

"When two or more persons are joint tenants, or tenants in common, of land in equal shares, such persons shall be allowed to retain twice the area prescribed in subsection two hereof, provided that the subsection shall not have effect where such joint tenancy or tenancy in common shall, in the opinion of the President of the Compensation Court, have been created for the purpose of taking advantage of this subsection."

The Committee divided on the question, "That the subsection be added to the clause."

AYES, 17.

Buchanan	Lang	Stout
Carncross	Massey	Thompson
Fraser	McGuire	Willis.
Green	McNab	<i>Tellers.</i>
Harris	Newman	Allen
Heke	Russell, W. R.	Bell.

NOES, 41.

Buddo	Houston	Morrison
Buick	Hutchison, W.	Parata
Cadman	Joyce	Pinkerton
Carnell	Kelly, W.	Pirani
Carroll	Larnach	Reeves
Collins	Lawry	Russell, G. W.
Crowther	Mackintosh	Seddon
Duncan	Maslin	Smith, E. M.
Earnshaw	McGowan	Smith, G. J.
Flatman	McKenzie, J.	Stevens
Graham	McKenzie, R.	Tanner.
Hall	McLachlan	<i>Tellers.</i>
Hall-Jones	Meredith	Mills
Hogg	Montgomery	O'Regan.

Majority against, 24.

Amendment negatived.

Subsection (3), first paragraph—"For the purposes of this section, first-class land shall be deemed to be land suitable wholly for agriculture."

Mr. MONTGOMERY moved, That the word "wholly" be struck out.

Amendment agreed to, and word struck out.

Mr. BELL moved to report progress.

The Committee divided.

AYES, 19.		
Bell	McKenzie, R.	Stout
Buchanan	Montgomery	Tanner
Crowther	Newman	Thompson.
Earnshaw	Parata	
Fraser	Russell, G. W.	<i>Tellers.</i>
Lang	Russell, W. R.	Allen
McGuire	Smith, G. J.	Massey.

NOES, 33.

Buddo	Harris	McNab
Buick	Hogg	Meredith
Cadman	Houston	Morrison
Carncross	Hutchison, W.	Pinkerton
Carnell	Larnach	Reeves
Carroll	Lawry	Seddon
Collins	Mackintosh	Smith, E. M.
Duncan	Maslin	Stevens.
Flatman	McGowan	<i>Tellers.</i>
Graham	McKenzie, J.	Mills
Hall	McLachlan	O'Regan.
Hall-Jones		

PAIRS.

<i>For.</i>	<i>Against.</i>
Button	Saunders
Duthie	Steward
Green.	Guinness.

Majority against, 14.

Motion negatived.

Captain RUSSELL moved the addition of the following proviso:—

"Provided that the owner shall have the option of deciding after the sitting of the Compensation Court whether to proceed further in the sale of the remainder of his estate if he should not, in his opinion, be allowed full compensation therefor."

The Committee divided on the question, "That the proviso be added to the clause."

AYES, 8.

Collins	Montgomery	<i>Tellers.</i>
Harris	Russell, W. R.	Allen
Massey	Stout.	Buchanan.

NOES, 35.

Buddo	Hutchison, W.	O'Regan
Buick	Joyce	Pinkerton
Cadman	Larnach	Pirani
Carncross	Lawry	Russell, G. W.
Carnell	Maslin	Seddon
Carroll	McGowan	Smith, E. M.
Earnshaw	McKenzie, J.	Smith, G. J.
Flatman	McKenzie, R.	Stevens
Graham	McLachlan	Tanner.
Hall	McNab	<i>Tellers.</i>
Hogg	Mills	Duncan
Houston	Morrison	Hall-Jones.

PAIRS.

<i>For.</i>	<i>Against.</i>
Button	Saunders
Duthie	Steward
Green.	Guinness.

Majority against, 27.

Amendment negatived.

Mr. J. MCKENZIE moved the addition of the following subsection:—

"Any owner of land taken compulsorily under this Act may, within one month after the gazetting of any Proclamation taking such land, give notice in writing to the Minister that he elects to remain in possession for a period to be named in such notice, not exceeding nine months from such date, and shall thereupon have a right to occupy such land for the period so stated, subject to the following conditions:—

"(a.) No part of the purchase-money shall be payable until the expiration of the said period.

"(b.) The Minister and any persons authorised by him, either generally or particularly, shall have full and free right of ingress, egress, and regress through, over, and upon any of the lands or premises so taken, for the purposes of survey, road-making, or inspection, in the same manner and to the same extent as if the said lands were Crown lands unoccupied."

Amendment agreed to.

Subsection inserted.

Mr. G. W. RUSSELL moved the addition of the following proviso:—

"Provided that, in the case of land situated within five miles of the City of Auckland, the City of Wellington, the City of Christchurch, and the City of Dunedin respectively, the limitation in this section shall be reduced to five hundred acres."

Amendment agreed to.

Progress reported.

The House adjourned at a quarter to four o'clock a.m.

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

Friday, 17th August, 1894.

First Readings.—Third Reading.—Middle District of New Zealand University College Bill—Companies' Accounts Audit Bill.

The Hon. the SPEAKER took the chair at half-past two o'clock.

PRAYERS.

FIRST READINGS.

Harbours Bill, Pohangina County Bill, Levels County Bill, Invercargill Racecourse Trustees Empowering Bill.

THIRD READING.

Adulteration Prevention Bill.

MIDDLE DISTRICT OF NEW ZEALAND UNIVERSITY COLLEGE BILL.

The Hon. Mr. BOWEN.—This Bill is intended to give machinery for affording to the residents around Cook Strait the same advantages of higher education that are given in the other large centres of the colony: and it certainly does seem a very unreasonable thing that a large proportion of the people of New Zealand should be excluded from this benefit.

If it is an advantage in other parts of the colony, it certainly is right that the same advantage should be given to those who are resident in this centre. I have noticed that a good deal of the objection that has been raised to this Bill has been based on the idea that it may in some way or another interfere with the interests of primary education. Well, in no country in the world has that ever been the case. It is always found that those who are most keenly interested in the education of one class of society, or interested in one particular form of education, are those who are most interested in all. And it must be remembered that these facilities given for university education are by no means offered to any one class of the community. It is quite the reverse. This is an attempt to give the same facilities of education to everybody. Those who are well off can always take care of their children and see that they are educated in any way they like; they can give them the highest education possible. But it is those whose means are limited who find it difficult to give education to their children, however clever these may be. Those who are anxious for the success of primary education, and for giving facilities to all those children who show special ability in the primary schools to obtain higher education,—surely it is those people who ought to insist on seeing that the young people in one particular part of the country have the same facilities as are given in other parts of the country. There is another objection which has been raised to this Bill—namely, that it is only a machinery Bill, and that, after all, it leads to nothing at present. Well, it is a machinery Bill, but it gives the means of establishing an institution which may gradually accumulate the means for carrying on its work. This will not be the first time in New Zealand that an institution has begun in a very small way, and without very great funds. The Canterbury University College was begun in this way. Many people in Canterbury were anxious that the young people should get the benefit of university education, and that they should have some kind of institution for that purpose affiliated to the University. Honourable members all know that the University of New Zealand was necessarily founded, somewhat on the model of the London University, as an examining body, the teaching to be left to local affiliated colleges. At that time there were only two educational institutions in Canterbury which could pretend to meet the want of a University College temporarily: those were the Museum, where geological and other scientific teaching could be carried on, and Christ's College. It was agreed between these two bodies to make an arrangement for an amalgamation, which was called the Collegiate Union, and they established a system of lectures, which were very keenly appreciated. This Collegiate Union was affiliated to the University. It was soon seen that this would lead to some more practical result, as the lectures were freely attended, and it ended in an endowment being given by the Provincial

Council to establish the necessary college. If the Collegiate Union had not thus led the way, I am quite satisfied we should have had much more difficulty than we had: in fact, we might never have been able to secure the endowment in time. Now, in Wellington I think something of the same kind might be done. It was proposed some years ago to make a beginning in a somewhat similar manner, and there are plenty of men in Wellington who would be quite capable and willing to give lectures, and the college might be started on a somewhat inadequate footing, but still it would be a start. I feel quite sure that, if those who are interested in the matter only set to work practically and in earnest, endowments, both public and private, will flow in to assist and keep it going. Therefore I think it is by no means a mere pretence or idle form to pass a Bill of this sort. There are those who object altogether to an endowment, and who say they are afraid to allow the Bill to pass because it will lead to an endowment.

The Hon. Mr. SHRIMSKI.—Hear, hear.

The Hon. Mr. BOWEN.—Well, Sir, if my honourable friend opposite is of that mind, I suppose he will oppose the Bill; but I wish him to consider whether, in doing so, he is not acting against the interests of those who are not rich, and who desire to obtain for their children the benefits of higher education. I should like him further to consider whether it is not the case that every country that has been successful not only in education, but in anything else, they have done their best to have the best education placed within the reach of every competent person in the country. I hope, Sir, the Bill will go into Committee, and if any objections are then made to its provisions I shall be glad to answer them. The Bill is a very simple one, and I commend it to the earnest consideration of the Council. I move, *That this Bill be now read the second time.*

The Hon. Sir G. S. WHITMORE.—I rise partly to remind this Council that the honourable gentleman who has just sat down is the father of the education system which has been so brilliantly successful in this colony, and at the same time to sympathize with him in the object which he says he now has in view—namely, to bring the highest education within the reach of the poorest in the community. I wish to point out that this question of endowment, which he passed rather lightly over, is one which in every way seems to be a very difficult one. In the Province of Otago a very large area of country was secured for education for all time, and divided amongst various institutions there. In the Province of Canterbury also there are large endowments for the same purpose. As for the Province of Auckland, I am not aware of the exact condition of things there educationally, but I believe they have very considerable endowments in that province also. Now, the Province of Wellington was singularly economical in this way: It did not rush its land into the market; and the consequence was that at the time the provinces were abolished it found itself in this position: that

it had not either landed endowments or any other endowments made for the education of the people; and I cannot help thinking—although, of course, there is nothing we can do in the matter—that either monetary or landed endowments ought to have been given to the middle district, which has been so unfairly left out from these benefits. The honourable gentleman, I hope, will succeed with his Bill, and I hope that his confidence in voluntary endowments, and in the money that may be obtained for the working of the institution, will be realised, and that sufficient will be found for the purpose, because the whole question depends on having proper professors for such an institution. You cannot have a properly-conducted institution unless you have good professors. I hope, as I have said, the honourable gentleman will succeed with his Bill, and realise his anticipation that this university college will be established without money.

The Hon. Mr. PHARAZYN.—I shall cordially support this Bill, which I think is very necessary, and which possibly in future may be an important measure; but I confess, Sir, I should have liked to see something more in it than mere machinery. It appears to me that machinery without steam-power is likely to be extremely useless.

The Hon. Mr. BOWEN.—Only the Government can supply that.

The Hon. Mr. PHARAZYN.—Exactly; no doubt the honourable gentleman has great faith in the Government providing steam-power in the shape of an endowment, or revenue of some kind; but I confess I have no such anticipation. I am very much afraid he will find there will be no probability of that for a very long time to come. As to private endowments, I am also afraid that our present system of taxation has disinclined wealthy people to assist in any public matter, feeling that they are already unjustly and unfairly taxed. I know there is amongst wealthy people a feeling that an attempt will possibly be made to heap taxation upon them, and therefore they are not inclined to assist public bodies. That, I am afraid, is the feeling, and it is growing in extent as our system of taxing private property goes on, as it seems likely to do. I have not much hope of any present outcome from the measure, but I hope to see, on the chance of some change taking place at some future time, that we may be able to accomplish the object which the honourable gentleman has in view.

The Hon. Mr. SHRIMSKI.—I do not rise for the purpose of opposing the measure because it is for Wellington, but because the whole colony does not contain as many people as one street in the great metropolis of London. Already we have a university in Auckland, and I had the opportunity of supporting the legislation for establishing the same. We have also a university at Christchurch, and one at Dunedin.

The Hon. Mr. BOWEN.—They are colleges.

The Hon. Mr. SHRIMSKI.—It comes to the same thing. I say we have already three

Hon. Mr. Bowen

universities in the colony, and over and above that we have colleges. I do not want to attempt, nor have I ever attempted, to curtail the education of the masses of the people. I think the Speaker will bear me out when I say that to the best of my humble means I have contributed to the education of the poorer classes. I only wish I could do more. Consequently, it cannot be said that I am opposed in any way to obtaining for others the benefits that I should have liked to have had myself. But, unfortunately, Sir, we are not in a position to have universities at every corner of the street; and, as the honourable gentleman calls it a college, I may remind him that we have already in Wellington a college of that kind, and consequently to found another would simply mean that these institutions would be antagonistic to one another, and that, I feel sure honourable members will admit, would not be beneficial. It is, Sir, the thin end of the wedge, to bring in a Bill of this sort as a mere machinery Bill. The endowments, no doubt, will follow hereafter. Having established the machinery, we must find the means with which to grease the wheels. I do not know that there is any real need for this district to have a university. It is all very well for the honourable gentleman who introduced the Bill in another Chamber to say there is. We know that he is a great enthusiast in education—we all are, more or less—and that he is devoted to the desire of promoting the welfare and the education and the advancement of the people. But, Sir, we have to take into consideration our present position, and he knows very well that we are so overburdened with these taxations that the endowments, as far as Dunedin is concerned, are not sufficient, even at the present day, to maintain the University staff there in a proper state of efficiency; and rents are coming down, and great tribulation is arising amongst the governors as to how to raise sufficient means to pay the cost of our university institution there. I suppose Canterbury is in the same position. Sooner or later, Sir, rents must come down, if the Government determine to carry on the policy which they desire to do, and the position of those institutions therefore will be as bad. The university in Auckland has an endowment of £4,000 a year, and I am satisfied that is not sufficient to satisfy the needs of that institution. Consequently, if we are to have another university here, we know that the Government for the time being will be continually harassed to provide means for the maintenance of the institution. Although I am not a resident of Wellington, I take a great interest in it, and I see that a great number of deputations wait upon Ministers for this, that, and the other thing. We have already a college established in this central district, as it is supposed to be. We have also high schools in Napier and Nelson. On the West Coast, likewise, they have high schools, and, if the West Coast is interested in obtaining the benefits of higher education, Canterbury is nearer to them than Wellington is, and consequently it is easier for the people there to go

to Christchurch, where there is an established institution. I am not desirous, however, of hindering any one from obtaining a higher education; but, in our present position, I do not think we are justified in creating this liability, nor do I think it is needed, seeing that there are already three universities in the colony. For these reasons, I shall oppose the Bill.

The Hon. Mr. BOLT.—I think the honourable gentleman who has just sat down made a mistake in alluding to the comparative smallness of our population as a reason for opposing this Bill. I have frequently heard that argument of the population applied to electoral and other purposes, and those who apply it appear to forget that we must also consider area as well as population. It is nonsense to say that, because our population is so small that it only amounts to that of a second-rate town in England, therefore we only need the political machinery that would suit such a town. It appears to me that the Hon. Mr. Bowen made an excellent point when, in order to show the necessity for this measure, he pointed to the fact that all the other districts—the districts in the extreme south of the colony and the district at the extreme north—were already provided for in this way, while at the same time the middle parts of New Zealand were not provided for at all. If, as I think honourable gentlemen will see, it was necessary to bring higher education home to those who are of small means in the two extreme ends of the colony, then it must be apparent to them that it is equally necessary here; and I can quite appreciate the honourable gentleman's argument when he says, if we do not provide higher education near the homes of those who are possessed of little means we are not studying the interests of the people. With regard to endowments, I confess I fail to see the force of the arguments advanced from that point of view. It appears to me that land set apart as an endowment for education may be put to quite as good a use and be quite as advantageous to the community as if it were freehold. The land will be put to use, and certainly ordinary production will arise from it, and the same advantages will accrue to the colony from those using the land as if it were occupied as private freeholds. Therefore I do not see any ground for arguments of that sort. I only trust honourable gentlemen will take the same view of the matter as that which has been placed before us by the Hon. Mr. Bowen. I think there is ample justification for bringing forward a measure of this sort, in order that provision in the direction indicated may be made for Wellington and the surrounding districts.

The Hon. Mr. McCULLOUGH.—I will support this measure. I do not see any reason why the inhabitants of the central district should not have equal facilities for higher education to those given to Christchurch, Dunedin, and Auckland. I have had opportunities for watching the results from the University College in Auckland, and they are eminently satisfactory. I think the poorer classes in Wellington should,

in fairness, have the same facilities granted to them that similar classes of the community have in Auckland, Christchurch, and Dunedin. As to the granting of endowments, I do not know that the waste lands of the colony could be put to better service than to be set apart for educational purposes, and I hope that the authorities of this University College, when established, will succeed in getting a very large endowment from the Government of the day. I have no doubt it will be well used when applied to educational purposes. I hope the Council will pass this Bill without much opposition.

The Hon. Sir P. A. BUCKLEY.—I have not the same high opinion of the education system of this colony which my honourable and gallant friend Sir George Whitmore has, because, as is well known, I have other views on this question, and I hope some day justice will be done to those who hold the same views as I do. While I think one ought not perhaps to interfere too much with the present system, which suits a great many, still there is injustice of a very serious character which has never yet been removed, and I hope the good sense of the country will remedy it before long. I think, however, there can be only one opinion as to the necessity to have here a college affiliated to the University. My honourable friend over the way seems to doubt what I am saying, but I am quite sure that no member of the Council appreciates the advantages of education more than my honourable friend. He is, like myself, one who has had to get higher education outside his own country in order to preserve his faith. Higher education was denied to me, for I could not receive university degrees without loss of my faith, and I was therefore obliged to go to a foreign country to get the education that ought to have been given me at Home. It is only recently that the rule has been relaxed in Ireland. With regard to this particular system, there is no doubt whatever that this is a Bill which ought to commend itself to everybody, no matter what his views may be on the primary system of education. I therefore think we cannot too much estimate the advantages that are likely to be derived hereafter from this measure, though at present it may be likened to a man-of-war without guns, because there is no provision for working the machinery. There is the machinery, but there is nothing else. I regret that endowments were not included in this Bill. They were included on the former occasion, when I heartily supported it. I am sure that if there were endowments in this Bill my honourable friend Mr. Pharazyn would oppose it. He reminds me of a gentleman who was listening to a charity sermon, and who was so affected at the discourse of the preacher that he put his hands into the pockets of his nearest neighbours and threw everything he found there into the plate. I am sure that when the honourable gentleman departs to a higher sphere he will leave a very large endowment to what I may call our national university. I remember the honourable gentleman in the Provincial

Council, when we generally voted on the same side: we had the misfortune, however, to come here, and we have never agreed since. The honourable gentleman was most enthusiastic in the cause of education, and was rather inclined to my views of what ought to be free to all classes of the people. I have always found him straightforward and high-minded, and everything one could say of a high-class honourable gentleman, except on this question, when the system of education seems to be to him like a red rag to a bull. I trust, this being the machinery, that we shall soon have oil to grease it and steam to set it to work, and that before long we shall have in this place what has been granted to other places—the means of giving higher education to those who otherwise would be deprived of it because they cannot leave the district.

The Hon. Mr. PHARAZYN.—As a matter of personal explanation, I must say the honourable gentleman is entirely mistaken as to my views of endowments. I should be glad to see them embodied in this Bill, and should cordially support them. And the honourable gentleman referred to the action I took in connection with himself in the old Provincial Council days. He may recollect that on that occasion I voted with him for a special land-tax—of which I had to pay a considerable proportion—for education. It was very unpopular with a great number of those whom I represented, who thought it a very great hardship; but I thought it better to submit to the tax than to allow our education system to disappear.

The Hon. Mr. KELLY.—I shall not oppose the second reading of the Bill, but I think it is due to this Council, when gentlemen take the responsibility of introducing a Bill establishing a new university, to point out some ways or means of providing for that university. We have not heard a word from the mover of the Bill as to how the money is to be provided—whether by charitable contributions, or by the Government by money granted, or whether it is to be openly done by endowments of public land; and I think, when a Bill of such importance as this is brought in, some information should be given to the Council on this point. I am not at all opposed to higher education. My sympathies are entirely with university education of a proper kind, and I do believe that we should give it to all those who are fitted for it. But we must take this into consideration: We have already three universities; and I question whether, with our limited population, we shall find students to fill another. I am told that there are very few students in Auckland—only two or three in some classes. Now, as to what has been said—that the people of this district have been deprived of higher education—I cannot see that this is correct. I can understand the poorer classes in Wellington itself being deprived of it because there is no university in the town; but, with regard to those living outside Wellington, who would have to come and lodge in the town, they could just as well go anywhere else. There would be no advantage to people living fifty

Hon. Mr. McCullough

miles or so of Wellington to have this college established here, because they could go just as well to Auckland or Christchurch, at the same expense. Take, for instance, the people residing in the Taranaki District: it would be of no benefit to them, as they are as near to Auckland and practically as near to Christchurch, and there would be very little difference to them in the cost. With respect to endowments, I look upon this matter with some suspicion. I cannot forget that on a former occasion when a Bill of this character was brought in there was a bare-faced, deliberate attempt made to rob Taranaki—to take land that had been set apart for higher education within that district under the University Act of 1874, and to appropriate it for the Wellington District. Seeing that this has been attempted before, I must be excused for having a suspicion in my mind that some such attempt might be made again. The Hon. the Attorney-General said this measure was like a ship without guns. That is so; and it reminds me of another ship without guns that was destined to produce strained international feeling between England and the United States. I refer to the celebrated "Alabama," built in Liverpool, without guns, which were subsequently taken aboard outside British waters, when she went on her piratical course to prey on the shipping of the Northern States of America. I hope this Bill, if it becomes law, will not follow such an immoral example and endeavour to prey on the endowments of the Taranaki Provincial District. I shall let the second reading go, but it will be my duty to watch the Bill closely in future.

The Hon. Mr. BOWEN.—I wish to say that there is no desire to start another university. I must remind honourable members who seem to think there is, that when the University was established it was seen that, in a country like this, it could only be successful by making the central body rather an examining body than anything else, and by establishing colleges in the centres where they were most wanted. All that is proposed now is to establish a university college in Wellington connected with the University. My honourable friend Mr. Shrimski is misled by a name when he refers to Wellington College; it is just like Christ's College, in Christchurch: it is a grammar school. Secondary schools are very often called colleges, which is a mistake, and has very often led to mistakes. The Wellington College is a grammar school, and has nothing to do with the University, or with university education. It has been said that it would be the same thing to those who lived some distance from Wellington if they had to send their sons to Christchurch or Auckland. It is true that a college at Wellington would not particularly benefit Taranaki, because that is, perhaps, as near to Auckland as to Wellington; but in every case there will always be some place in the middle, as this happens to be. But there is no doubt there is a very large population around Wellington, and along both shores of Cook Strait, to whom Wellington would be a much more convenient centre than the cities either

in the extreme south or north. If people have to send their sons so far away from home as those places, they might almost as well send them out of the colony altogether. And we see what is the result of the present state of affairs. There are a large number of students who matriculate here, but who cannot go any further, and these young people are deprived of the opportunity of education which is enjoyed by their fellow-colonists near other centres of population. No doubt this system of one examining body, with colleges at a distance from each other, has this disadvantage—and it is one which is often felt in places where there is a much larger population: that there is not that education by intercourse with the highest intelligence of the country, and among the students themselves, that obtains in the universities in the Old Country. One of the greatest elements of education, and, perhaps, the most forcible, is the concourse of young people, all studying with the one object, and all rubbing ideas together. It is almost as valuable a part of education as the lectures and the professorial teaching themselves. These influences we cannot have now, but in time to come they will grow and bear fruit; in the meantime we must make a beginning. I do not mind saying what my opinion is upon the subject of endowments. This Bill was brought in by a private member in another place, and it was not possible for him to make provision for endowments—that could only be done by the Government; but my own opinion is that, before the lands of the colony are all dispersed, there ought to be large endowments made for every form of education in the country—for primary as well as for secondary and university education. I do not think primary education should be left entirely to annual appropriation. It would be a good thing if it was based on very large land-endowments, and I do not think Parliament could do better than create such endowments. As to the management of the land reserved, that is a question for the Legislature. If we are to have perpetual leases and all that sort of thing, why on earth should not the proceeds of those leases be permanently appropriated for education as well as for the thousand-and-one projects that are every year forced on the attention of the Government? I do not like to trust altogether to annual votes for primary or any other education. The tone in which this question has been discussed in the Council shows that honourable members consider the Bill to be a step in the right direction.

Bill read the second time.

COMPANIES' ACCOUNTS AUDIT BILL.

The Hon. Mr. MONTGOMERY, in moving, *That this Bill be now read the second time*, said it was intended to give power to the Audit Office to audit the accounts of companies. It was not compulsory. The Audit Office would only come in upon the application of the shareholders of the company. Subsection (1) of clause 2 said that the Governor might grant an audit on the application—

"(1.) Of a majority in number representing two-thirds in value of the shareholders of any limited-liability company registered under 'The Companies Act, 1882'; or

"(2.) Of a majority in number of the shareholders of any company registered as aforesaid, with unlimited liability; or

"(3.) Of a majority in number representing one-third in value of the shareholders of any incorporated mining company carrying on mining operations in the colony, registered under 'The Mining Companies Act, 1886,' or any similar Act previously in force."

The audit of the Audit Office should be of very considerable value; but the value of that audit would be very much increased if the officers had power to call in experts to ascertain the value of the assets of a company. An audit simply to see that the book-keeping was right, that the entries had been duly made, and vouchers produced to show that everything had been done correctly—that the balances had been brought down, and that the amount of money, if any, was in the bank—that was no doubt an audit of some importance. But they saw that in Victoria, in the matter of some banks and companies, such audit had no value so far as showing what was the real state of the bank or company. A bank or company might be in a thoroughly insolvent condition because of its advances being too large compared with the value of the property upon which those advances were made: and sometimes advances had been made to directors and the friends of directors. There was provision in this Bill that, if so required by the application, a valuation should be made of the assets of a company—that, in point of fact, the Audit Office could call in experts to report upon the value of those assets. That could only be done on the application of a large number of the shareholders of the company. He would have been very glad to have seen the Bill provide that, in case the shareholders of a company desired an audit, the application should carry with it the power to the Audit Office to examine the securities. However, he thought this Bill would be of considerable use. He thought, indeed, it went a great distance towards what honourable members would like to see. They knew that companies were not always as careful about their advances as they should be, and if this Bill did something towards rectifying the evils to which he had alluded it would have a good effect. However, they would see how it worked, and, if necessary, could subsequently go further in the direction he had suggested. Of course there was this difficulty: If Parliament made a compulsory valuation of securities in all cases where applications were made by shareholders of companies for a mere audit, the shareholders might consider that the Government had a moral responsibility imposed upon it in case a fall in the value of the securities of the company showed a difference between the estimate of the auditors and the actual value ascertained later. This Bill was not compulsory. It did not involve the colony in any responsibility

whatever. He might say, further, that the Bill had been before the Statutes Revision Committee, and it was after their report that it had gone through the other Chamber, and was now before the Council for its assent or for modification.

The Hon. Mr. STEVENS said it might be taken for granted that the passage of this Bill through the Statutes Revision Committee merely meant that the Committee was satisfied that the Bill was effective for the purpose of bringing into play certain proposed provisions; but he thought that the Committee would not, in this or any other case, accept what might be termed the policy of a measure. He disagreed with his honourable friend in thinking that the invitation of the companies to perform this audit necessarily in any way relieved the Government from the responsibility for the due performance of the work which it was invited to undertake and which, in such case, they had accepted. It appeared to him that there were great doubts whether this measure would be of any great practical benefit. He would proceed to state his reasons for thinking so. In the first place, was there any reason why the Government audit should be better than any other efficient audit? Was it performed necessarily by persons who knew more about the business of auditing? Of course the Government auditors might be all that they should be, and he, for his part, had not a word to say against the Government audit system as regarded its efficiency. A majority of the shareholders could call this thing into operation; but the same majority could at any time alter their memorandum of association. They could appoint special auditors; they could appoint a committee of their own shareholders for the purpose of investigating the matter; they could appoint experts—as his honourable friend had said could be done under this Bill—to investigate the state of the assets; and there was nothing to prevent them from having their views carried into effect. It seemed to him that the Bill, however harmless it might be, must not be regarded in the light of a cure for any of the evils which they knew were likely to exist, and which probably would exist as long as people chose to join joint-stock companies and neglect their own business, which was really the root of the whole thing. He had no hesitation in saying—having had a rather long experience—that, whenever he had shares in a company which had not succeeded, any losses which might have arisen had been very largely due to his own want of care in not insisting upon proper investigation and upon the directors being properly called to account: and they would be no more called to account under this Bill than they could be at present. If any one would take the trouble to read the Companies Act he must arrive, he thought, at the conclusion which he had come to. At any time a majority of the shareholders might impose on the directors unlimited liability. Could there be any greater security than that? And yet it was a fact that under the Companies Act that

Hon. Mr. Montgomery

could be done at any time by special resolution. In looking over the discussion which took place elsewhere on this measure, he noticed that great stress was laid upon some insurance company which had not succeeded. No audit in the world could make you feel confident in the absolute stability and solvency of an insurance company. The very nature of insurance was in itself such that it was impossible to determine that. It could only deal by an estimate and by certain comparisons of facts and probabilities. A Government audit could not determine, so far as he could understand, that an insurance company, or, indeed, any other company, was absolutely secure, any more than other means could determine it. It seemed to him that, while there was no objection whatever to be taken to this Bill as a mere addition to the literature of what you might call commercial law, it would be a great mistake to imagine they were, in passing this Bill, providing a remedy for any of the evils to which he had made reference, and which it was intended to cure. For his own part, he was not going to oppose the Bill in any way, but he must say he was very far from sanguine as to its result.

The Hon. Mr. PHARAZYN entirely agreed with the honourable gentleman who had just sat down as to the probable use of this Bill. He thought it was exactly as the honourable gentleman had stated; it really did nothing more than the present audit did in establishing the absolute solvency of any company. He did not entirely agree with the Hon. Mr. Stevens that the Bill would have no other effect, for he was inclined to think that if the shareholders called upon the Government to audit their accounts it would be considered by the public that there was a kind of guarantee of the solvency of the company. There would be something of the same kind of feeling as was produced by the Government stamp upon patent medicines. There were a large number of persons who looked upon the Government stamp upon patent medicines as a guarantee of efficacy, and as a proof that it was perfectly wholesome, and would do them good. No doubt a great deal of mischief was done by such a belief, and he was afraid the same thing would occur under this Bill. If a company were once audited by a Government auditor there would be a sort of confidence produced amongst the outside public; and he would rather see the matter left alone, as he was of opinion that the Government should not be involved in any dealings with private persons. The Government had been interested to some extent on special occasions with outside companies. He did not see that this Bill was likely to do any good, and it might do a very considerable amount of mischief.

The Hon. Mr. OLIVER was rather disposed to differ from the honourable gentlemen who had addressed the Council with regard to the probable value of this Bill. There was one rather important portion of it which they had rather failed to recognise—that was, the provision that the auditor appointed by the Govern-

ment to make examination might, if required by the shareholders, order valuation to be made of the assets of any such company.

The Hon. Mr. STEVENS.—That is exactly what we say.

The Hon. Mr. OLIVER did not think the extreme importance of that provision had met with full recognition. It seemed to him that auditing, as usually conducted, had failed mainly from the lack of a proper valuation being made. The duty devolving upon the auditor had often been perfunctorily performed, and been confined to an examination of the books and vouchers; and, if the balance of cash stated to be in hand and the balance at the banker's had proved to accord with the statements made by the officers of the company, the auditor passed these as being everything that could be desired. These audits had generally failed in usefulness because the auditor did not cause a valuation of assets to be made, and it was manifest that any report from an auditor which was not based on a valuation of the assets might be misleading. They had had proof furnished lately, in an examination of the affairs of a company in which this colony was very much interested, of the inutility of relying even on an examination by a member of the Society of Chartered Accountants. An audit of that company had been made, the auditor had been examined in Court, and the audit had been proved to be of the most defective character. The auditor had so interpreted his duties as to really be of no service to the shareholders. He (Mr. Oliver) thought they could rely upon it, from previous experience, that an examination by an officer of the Audit Department would be more trustworthy than such an examination as he has just mentioned. If the machinery provided by the Audit Department was known to be readily accessible to the shareholders of a company, an independent audit would then be far more frequently called for. He thought the task of getting a majority of shareholders together for the purpose of calling for such an audit would be a less arduous one than it was in the past to get a majority to make use of the Companies Act, as suggested by the Hon. Mr. Stevens. He agreed with that honourable gentleman that nothing they could do by legislation would keep a company right unless good directors were chosen and the shareholders were vigilant.

The Hon. Mr. BONAR had no objection to offer to the passing of the Bill, but it seemed to him that the Bill would not secure what was required—namely, a thorough audit of the company's affairs. He thoroughly agreed with the remarks made by the Hon. Mr. Stevens as to the difficulty, which did not lie, however, in any question of audit, but with the shareholders themselves, who practically neglected their own interests and allowed things to drift. Under the Companies Act provision of a very drastic character was made for audit, and they could not have anything stricter than this if the auditor attended to his business. When a man was under a heavy liability to perform his

duty, surely it would be worth his while to look after it, and in his own interest he would attend to his business. In the Mining Companies Act provision was made for an audit—namely, in clause 4 of “The Mining Companies Act, 1892.” If the shareholders and directors did their duty, then, in his opinion, the audit provided was amply sufficient; and he did not think any Government auditor could have as good a knowledge, by any possibility, as a competent auditor properly appointed by the directors and shareholders, for which they already had power. There might be some sort of feeling that because a Government auditor had been in and reported therefore everything was going on all right; but he did not think anything of the kind, or that a Government auditor was in a bit better position than an auditor duly appointed by the shareholders. The fact was, the shareholders themselves neglected their affairs, and consequently they had only themselves to blame. No one could object to there being a thorough investigation made, but the Government auditors were not any more fitted to audit mining claims than a competent man who might be appointed by the shareholders—in fact, not nearly so good. He should not oppose the Bill, although he did not think it would accomplish the object sought.

The Hon. Mr. SHRIMSKI was much pleased that the Government had introduced this measure, and would support it, for many reasons. In the first place, he would point out that the very fear that the directors would be liable to have a Government audit would keep them within bounds and make them pay proper attention to their affairs. He, unfortunately, with a good many others, had suffered a good deal lately in the colony through various companies. At present the auditors were taken from amongst the shareholders, and, in most cases, the shareholders agreed to anything the directors wished them to do. What had been the case with the institution referred to by the Hon. Mr. Oliver? One of the auditors in the Bank of New Zealand had been one of its own clients, and had been receiving benefits from the institution, and very likely, as they had been told, he had not paid that attention to the question of the bonds or securities that would have been paid if there had been an investigation by a Government auditor. He remembered the case of Mr. Tunks, of Auckland, who was auditor for the Bank of New Zealand at one time, and who prevented the shareholders from getting that information in reference to the bank's affairs that they were entitled to. It was all very well to say that the shareholders were responsible for their own neglect to get things done; but the directors, as a rule, sent out reasons for their proposals before the meeting of a company took place, and they got all the proxies they could, and then, when the report came before the meeting, the directors held the proxies, and the shareholders had not sufficient support to enable them to carry their way. He was entirely in favour of the Bill, with the ex-

ception of some slight amendment which was necessary in subsection (c) of clause 3. That subsection read as follows:—

“If any officer or agent refuses to produce any such book or document, or to answer any question relating to the affairs of the company, he shall incur a penalty not exceeding five pounds in respect of each offence.”

That penalty was not sufficient, and, in addition to the fine, there should be an alternative of imprisonment. When in Committee he would move to that effect. The clause continued,—

“Upon the conclusion of the examination the Audit Office shall report to the directors of the company, who shall place such report before the shareholders of the company at the next meeting of the company; and, in case of failure or neglect on the part of the directors to comply with the requirements of this section, every director of the company who fails or neglects as aforesaid shall be liable to a penalty not exceeding fifty pounds, to be recovered in a summary manner on the prosecution of any shareholder of the company.”

In Committee, he would like to see added to the clause the alternative of imprisonment for a period not exceeding six months. There were many persons in the colony who had lately sustained heavy losses through various companies, and it was high time some action was taken to protect people by bringing in a Bill to prevent their being defrauded by the companies.

The Hon. Mr. MONTGOMERY, in reply, said the Hon. Mr. Stevens had stated he understood that the carrying-out of the provisions of this Bill would not relieve the Government from responsibility.

The Hon. Mr. STEVENS explained that what he had said was that it would not relieve them any more than the position stated by his honourable friend, whose view was that the Government, after having been invited to have an audit performed, would be free from responsibility, whilst in the other case, having power to take the initiative, there would be responsibility.

The Hon. Mr. MONTGOMERY said, then the honourable gentleman asked why a Government audit should be better than an efficient private audit. That word “efficient” was a very comprehensive word. If it were efficient it would be as good as any other could be. It would cover the whole ground. What he objected to was that the audit was not efficient, in many cases. It was merely a book-keeping affair, to see that matters which were entered in the books corresponded with the ledger balances, that the balances were brought down correctly, and the amount in the bank ascertained. He agreed with his honourable friend Mr. Stevens that this Bill would not altogether cure the evil it aimed at. It would require a much more drastic measure to do so. It would, however, go some distance in the direction of reassuring shareholders when there was an independent auditor to examine the accounts. With regard to what the Hon.

Hon. Mr. Bonar

Mr. Shrimski had said concerning the £5 penalty for not showing the books being too low, of course the refusal to show books would defeat the audit altogether, and it might pay some men, in cases such as they had seen described in the public Press recently, to give £5 to stop an audit. He did not think it was a perfect measure, but it would go some distance in the right direction. In his opinion, a better measure would be obtained if legislation were passed to oblige the auditors of a company to employ sworn experts to examine the assets of the company and report to the shareholders. The result of that thorough examination, he thought, would be more comprehensive than that provided in the present Bill. At the same time, he was going to support the Bill as it was brought down, as he believed good would come of it.

Bill read the second time.

The Council adjourned at five minutes past four o'clock p.m.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.

Friday, 17th August, 1894.

First Reading—Land for Settlements Bill—Adjournment.

MR. SPEAKER took the chair at half-past two o'clock.

PRAYERS.

FIRST READING.

Wellington Reclaimed Land Bill.

LAND FOR SETTLEMENTS BILL.

IN COMMITTEE.

Clause 10.—Colonial Treasurer may borrow money for the purposes of this Act, within limits.

MR. EARNSHAW moved to strike out the word "two," in the amount £250,000, with the view of inserting the word "one" in lieu thereof, so as to limit the amount that may be borrowed in any one year to £150,000.

The Committee divided on the question, "That the word 'two' stand part of the clause."

AYES, 41.

Bell	Hutchison, W.	Newman
Buddo	Larnach	Parata
Buick	Lawry	Pinkerton
Cadman	Mackintosh	Pirani
Carncross	McGowan	Russell, G. W.
Carroll	McKenzie, J.	Smith, E. M.
Collins	McKenzie, R.	Smith, G. J.
Duncan	McLachlan	Steward
Flatman	McNab	Tanner
Graham	Meredith	Ward
Hall	Millar	Willis.
Hall-Jones	Mills	<i>Tellers.</i>
Hogg	Montgomery	Carnell
Houston	Morrison	Maslin.

VOL. LXXXV.—2.

NOES, 12.

Allen	Mitchelson	Wilson.
Buchanan	O'Regan	<i>Tellers.</i>
Crowther	Stout	Earnshaw
Heke	Thompson	Massey.
Kelly, J. W.		

PAIRS.

<i>For.</i>	<i>Against.</i>
Guinness	Duthie
Harris	Lang
Mackenzie, T.	Te Ao
Reeves	McGuire
Saunders	Hutchison, G.
Seddon	Russell, W. R.
Stevens.	Fraser.

Majority for, 29.

Amendment negatived.

MR. EARNSHAW moved, That the words "and fifty" be struck out, so as to make the amount £200,000, instead of £250,000.

The Committee divided on the question, "That the words proposed to be struck out stand part of the clause."

AYES, 46.

Bell	Kelly, W.	Pera
Buddo	Larnach	Pinkerton
Buick	Lawry	Pirani
Cadman	Mackintosh	Reeves
Carncross	Maslin	Russell, G. W.
Carnell	McGowan	Seddon
Carroll	McKenzie, J.	Smith, E. M.
Duncan	McKenzie, R.	Smith, G. J.
Graham	McLachlan	Stevens
Hall	McNab	Steward
Hall-Jones	Meredith	Tanner
Harris	Millar	Willis.
Hogg	Mills	
Houston	Morrison	<i>Tellers.</i>
Hutchison, W.	Newman	Collins
Joyce	Parata	Montgomery.

NOES, 16.

Button	Lang	Thompson
Crowther	Massey	Wilson.
Duthie	McGuire	
Earnshaw	Mitchelson	<i>Tellers.</i>
Heke	O'Regan	Allen
Kelly, J. W.	Stout	Buchanan.

PAIRS.

<i>For.</i>	<i>Against.</i>
Ward	Russell, W. R.
Mackenzie, T.	Te Ao
Saunders.	Hutchison, G.

Majority for, 30.

Words retained.

MR. J. MCKENZIE moved to insert the words "and in section fourteen of this Act" at the end of the clause.

Motion agreed to.

Clause as amended agreed to.

Clause 17.—"The rental of land acquired under this Act shall be at the rate of five per centum for interest on the capital value of the land, and such capital value shall be fixed at a rate sufficient to cover the cost of original acquisition of the land, together with a sufficient sum added thereto to cover the cost of survey, roading, and subdivision, the price of

so much of the land as shall be absorbed by roads and reserves on subdivision, and the estimated cost of administration.

"Such rental shall be paid into the separate account aforesaid."

Mr. G. W. RUSSELL moved to strike out "the rate of five per centum for," with the view of inserting "such rate as will be one per centum in excess of the."

The Committee divided on the question, "That the words proposed to be omitted stand part of the clause."

AYES, 42.

Buddo	Hutchison, W.	Mills
Buick	Joyce	Morrison
Cadman	Kelly, J. W.	O'Regan
Carncross	Larnach	Parata
Carnell	Lawry	Reeves
Carroll	Mackenzie, T.	Russell, W. R.
Collins	Maslin	Seddon
Duncan	Massey	Smith, E. M.
Fraser	McGowan	Stevens
Graham	McKenzie, J.	Thompson
Hall	McKenzie, R.	Ward.
Hall-Jones	McLachlan	<i>Tellers.</i>
Harris	McNab	Montgomery
Hogg	Meredith	Pinkerton.
Houston		

NOES, 8.

Buchanan	Newman	<i>Tellers.</i>
Earnshaw	Smith, G. J.	Russell, G. W.
Heke	Stout.	Tanner.

PAIRS.

<i>For.</i>	<i>Against.</i>
Pere	Button
Saunders	Hutchison, G.
Steward.	Mitchelson.

Majority for, 34.

Words retained.

Clause agreed to.

Clause 19.—"Lands acquired under this Act, whether the same be classed as rural, suburban, or town lands, shall be disposed of under the lease-in-perpetuity system of the Land Acts, or, if pastoral land, shall be disposed of as small grazing-runs under Part V. of that Act, subject to regulations made under this Act.

"No person shall be capable of becoming the holder of any land under this Act exceeding the limits made by such regulations."

Mr. G. W. RUSSELL moved to strike out all the words after the word "Acts," with a view to insert the following words:—

"Provided that all lands disposed of under this Act shall be subject to revaluation every thirty years; but on such revaluation there shall not be taken into account any increase of value caused by the improvements made by the lessee, but only such increase as may have been caused by the expenditure of public money, the increase of population, and other causes independent of the selector."

The Committee divided on the question, "That the words proposed to be omitted stand part of the clause."

AYES, 40.

Buchanan	Houston	Parata
Buddo	Hutchison, W.	Pinkerton
Buick	Kelly, W.	Pirani
Cadman	Larnach	Reeves
Carncross	Lawry	Russell, W. R.
Carnell	Massey	Seddon
Carroll	McGowan	Stevens
Collins	McGuire	Thompson
Duncan	McKenzie, J.	Ward
Fraser	McKenzie, R.	Wilson.
Hall	McLachlan	
Hall-Jones	Millar	<i>Tellers.</i>
Harris	Montgomery	Meredith
Hogg	Morrison	Mills.

NOES, 11.

Bell	Maslin	Stout.
Earnshaw	McNab	<i>Tellers.</i>
Graham	O'Regan	Russell, G. W.
Kelly, J. W.	Smith, G. J.	Tanner.

PAIRS.

<i>For.</i>	<i>Against.</i>
Mackintosh	Allen
Mackenzie, T.	Te Ao
Pere	Button
Saunders	Hutchison, G.
Steward.	Mitchelson.

Majority for, 29.

Words retained.

Mr. MCGUIRE moved the addition of the following proviso:—

"Provided that the lessee shall have complied with the prescribed conditions of improvements, he shall be entitled to exchange his lease in perpetuity for a perpetual lease, and to acquire the fee-simple of the land comprising his lease at a price to be fixed at the time when the lease is granted, such price not to be less than the capital on which his rent has been calculated or based."

The Committee divided on the question, "That the proviso be added to the clause."

AYES, 6.

Harris	McGuire	<i>Tellers.</i>
Lawry	Russell, W. R.	Buchanan
		Massey.

NOES, 43.

Bell	Larnach	Pirani
Buddo	Maslin	Reeves
Cadman	McGowan	Russell, G. W.
Carncross	McKenzie, J.	Seddon
Carnell	McKenzie, R.	Smith, E. M.
Carroll	McLachlan	Smith, G. J.
Collins	McNab	Stevens
Duncan	Meredith	Stout
Earnshaw	Millar	Tanner
Graham	Mills	Thompson
Hall	Montgomery	Ward.
Hogg	Morrison	
Houston	O'Regan	<i>Tellers.</i>
Hutchison, W.	Parata	Buick
Kelly, W.	Pinkerton	Hall-Jones.

PAIRS.

<i>For.</i>	<i>Against.</i>
Mackenzie, T.	Te Ao
Mackintosh	Allen

Pere	Button
Saunders	Hutchison, G.
Steward.	Mitchelson.

Majority against, 37.

Amendment negatived.

Mr. G. W. RUSSELL moved the addition of the following proviso:—

"No person shall be capable of becoming the holder of any land under this Act exceeding the following areas: Of first-class land, two hundred acres; of second-class land, six hundred and forty acres; and of pastoral land, two thousand five hundred acres. And no person already owning freehold lands of any of the areas and classes respectively stated above, or occupying any of such areas and classes respectively as a tenant of the Crown under any Land Act in force in the colony, shall be entitled to become the holder of land under this Act.

"And no person shall be entitled to hold under this Act any area of land which, together with land owned by him or occupied by him as a tenant of the Crown, shall exceed the total areas aforesaid, namely: Of first-class land, two hundred acres; of second-class land, six hundred and forty acres; and of pastoral land, two thousand five hundred acres."

The Committee divided on the question, "That the proviso be added to the clause."

AYES, 8.

Earnshaw	Millar	<i>Tellers.</i>
Hall-Jones	Smith, G. J.	Russell, G. W.
Maslin	Stout.	Tanner.

NOES, 37.

Bell	Hogg	Morrison
Buchanan	Houston	O'Regan
Buddo	Hutchison, W.	Parata
Buick	Larnach	Pinkerton
Cadman	Lawry	Reeves
Carncross	Massey	Seddon
Carnell	McGowan	Smith, E. M.
Carroll	McGuire	Stevens
Collins	McKenzie, J.	Thompson.
Duncan	McKenzie, R.	
Fraser	McLachlan	<i>Tellers.</i>
Hall	McNab	Meredith
Harris	Mills	Montgomery.

PAIRS.

<i>For.</i>	<i>Against.</i>
Allen	Mackintosh
Button	Pere
Hutchison, G.	Saunders
Mitchelson	Steward
Russell, W. R.	Ward
Te Ao.	Mackenzie, T.

Majority against, 29.

Amendment negatived.

Clause 28.—Expiration of Act.

Mr. EARNSHAW moved the addition of the words: "but section ten shall be in operation until the thirty-first day of March, one thousand eight hundred and ninety-six, and no longer."

The Committee divided on the question, "That the words be added to the clause."

AYES, 9.

Buchanan	McLachlan	<i>Tellers.</i>
Fraser	Stout	Bell
Maslin	Thompson.	Earnshaw.
Massey		

NOES, 34.

Buddo	Larnach	Pirani
Buick	Lawry	Reeves
Cadman	McGowan	Russell, G. W.
Carncross	McKenzie, J.	Seddon
Carnell	McKenzie, R.	Smith, E. M.
Carroll	McNab	Smith, G. J.
Collins	Meredith	Stevens
Duncan	Millar	Tanner.
Hall-Jones	Montgomery	
Harris	Morrison	<i>Tellers.</i>
Hogg	O'Regan	Hall
Houston	Pinkerton	Mills.

PAIRS.

<i>For.</i>	<i>Against.</i>
Allen	Mackintosh
Button	Pere
Hutchison, G.	Saunders
Mitchelson	Steward
Russell, W. R.	Ward
Te Ao.	Mackenzie, T.

Majority against, 25.

Amendment negatived.

Bill reported.

ADJOURNMENT.

Mr. SEDDON moved, That the House do now adjourn.

The House divided.

AYES, 27.

Buddo	McGowan	Reeves
Buick	McKenzie, J.	Russell, G. W.
Cadman	McLachlan	Seddon
Carncross	Meredith	Smith, E. M.
Collins	Millar	Smith, G. J.
Fraser	Mills	Tanner.
Hall	Morrison	<i>Tellers.</i>
Harris	Parata	Lawry
Hogg	Pinkerton	Stevens.
Houston		

NOES, 13.

Buchanan	Joyce	Pirani.
Carnell	Maslin	
Carroll	Massey	<i>Tellers.</i>
Duncan	McKenzie, R.	Hall-Jones
Earnshaw	O'Regan	McNab.

PAIRS.

<i>For.</i>	<i>Against.</i>
Mackintosh	Allen
Saunders	Button
Steward	Mitchelson
Stout	Willis
Ward.	Russell, W. R.

Majority for, 14.

Motion agreed to.

The House adjourned at a quarter to five o'clock a.m.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.

Monday, 20th August, 1894.

First Reading—Third Readings—Onehunga Cemetery Bill—Wellington City Drainage Empowering Bill—Wairarapa Hospital District Bill—Dunedin Public Abattoirs Bill—Ocean Beach Public Domain Bill—Riverton Harbour Board Empowering Bill—Adjournment.

Mr. SPEAKER took the chair at half-past seven o'clock.

PRAYERS.

FIRST READING.

Adulteration Prevention Bill.

THIRD READINGS.

Havelock Commonage Bill, Timaru Harbour District Rating Bill, Timaru Harbour Reclamation Bill.

ONEHUNGA CEMETERY BILL.

IN COMMITTEE.

Sir MAURICE O'RORKE wished to state that he was much gratified to find that on this occasion every clergyman in the Town of Onehunga had appealed to the House in favour of this measure. They had all signed a memorial praying members to give the measure their support. The memorial was signed on behalf of the several denominations by their respective ministers, as follow: For the Church of England by the Rev. Mr. Mulgan; for the Roman Catholic Church by the Rev. Father Paul; for the Wesleyan Church by the Rev. Henry Bull; for the Presbyterian Church by the Rev. Robert Ferguson; for the Congregational Church by the Rev. Henry W. Miller; by the Curate of St. Peter's, Onehunga, Mr. Wilson; and by the Captain of the Salvation Army, Mr. Ward. It was not on every occasion they could find clergymen unanimously supporting a matter that affected their respective interests, so that he hoped the fact of these gentlemen coming forward in favour of the passing by this House of the present Onehunga Cemetery Bill would do away with any petty feelings that might exist against the arrangement entered into by the Parliament of New Zealand in 1881 with the Borough Council of Onehunga for establishing a public cemetery at Onehunga. When the decree for the abolition of the provinces went forth every inducement was held out to the country and town districts to come under the new order of things. The inducements were the bestowal upon them of publicans' licenses and of substantial endowments in land. Onehunga was one of those districts that were not in favour of abolition, and when the provinces were swept away it had to come under the new order of things, constitute itself a municipality, and accept the land-endowment that was offered to municipalities: up to that time it was a Road Board district, but it became a municipality; and half the endowment then given to municipalities was granted to it—namely, a thousand acres of land in the district of Hokianga. A little

before the abolition of the provinces the Provincial Legislature of Auckland acquired a property of forty-seven acres in the neighbourhood of Onehunga, with the intention of erecting a slaughterhouse there; but, owing to a change in the Superintendency of Auckland, that arrangement was never carried out, and when the abolition took place these forty-seven acres of ground were lying idle near the Town of Onehunga, virtually waste land of the Crown. For many years before this Onehunga had been quite destitute of a public burying-ground. There were two acres there which had been set apart fifty years from the present time—one for the Church of England community, and the other for the Roman Catholic community. The Church of England acre was overcrowded. It was not, as it might have been, confined to members of the Church of England, but members of all denominations were buried there except Roman Catholics. Members would hardly believe that that state of affairs still prevailed in Onehunga. Every one buried in Onehunga must submit to one of two burial ceremonies, the Church of England service or the Roman Catholic service. The Roman Catholic burial-ground being exclusively reserved for the Roman Catholics, the burial-service was that of the Roman Catholic Church. But whoever was buried in the Church of England ground, whether Wesleyan, Presbyterian, or Congregationalist, must be buried according to the rites of the Church of England. Speaking as a member of the Church of England, he thought it was not fair to those other bodies that their clergymen should not officiate at the graves of members of their Church. It was, beside the public grounds, in a great measure to get rid of this unfair system that he desired that this ground set apart by Act of this House—secured to all denominations by grant from the Crown—should be allowed to be so used that all communities might bury in this ground subject to the rites of their own Church. Not only that, but the matter had gone so far that the new cemetery, though closed for the present, had been amicably allotted to the various denominational bodies, and services had been held in that ground by nearly all, if not all, of the various ministers. He had himself been present when members of different denominational bodies had been buried there. He said that he had come before the House asking for the fulfilment of a strict bargain entered into by the Municipality of Onehunga and the General Government of the colony, and the bargain had been validated by an Act of the Legislature. So anxious was the Borough of Onehunga to have a burying-ground near to the abodes of the people, that they surrendered the thousand acres they held, referred to in the Act of 1881, on condition that the forty-seven acres should be divided into a cemetery-ground, a recreation-ground, and a rifle-range. The sole, or almost the sole, reason they made that bargain—surrendering the thousand acres for the forty-seven acres—was that they might have a burying-ground close to their dwelling-places. No

doubt they would hear members say that this was virtually town land; but would any member who knew how towns were laid out say they were laid out in blocks of forty-seven acres? He had, in his early days, lived on this very bit of ground as a farm. It was no town allotment, but a suburban allotment of nearly fifty acres, and outside of the Town of Onehunga; but some thirty-six years ago, when Onehunga was deemed entitled to send a member to the House, the boundaries originally laid down were enlarged, so as to include a sufficient population, and in that way this suburban land came within the precincts of the borough—not from the manner in which it had been laid out. It was his duty, acting on behalf of the Borough Council of Onehunga, to call on Parliament to see that the bargain made between the Town of Onehunga and the Government of this colony was not violated, or, if violated in error, that the error was repaired. A solemn bargain was made between the municipal authorities of Onehunga and the Government to the effect that if Onehunga surrendered its municipal endowment of a thousand acres at Hokianga it would receive forty-seven acres adjacent to Onehunga, apportioned to the purposes of a cemetery, a recreation-ground, and a rifle-range, and which bargain was validated by an Act of Parliament which empowered the Governor to issue the Crown grant for this cemetery, in order to carry out the agreement that was made; and which Crown grant was declared in the solemn language of the statute to be good, valid, and effectual to all intents and purposes whatsoever. This was what the Act of Parliament said on the subject:—

“The land [that is, the forty-seven acres] is proposed to be granted in exchange for all that parcel of land, containing by admeasurement 1,000 acres, more or less, being Section 3, Block V., Punakitere Survey District, reserved under ‘The Municipal Corporations Act, 1876,’ as an endowment for the Town of Onehunga, and which will therefore no longer be a reserve, but waste lands of the Crown.”

That was a description of the land that the Borough of Onehunga agreed to surrender. And what was the other side of the bargain? “The Special Powers and Contracts Act, 1881,” declared that the Governor might issue such Crown grant and do and execute such acts and deeds as are specified in the second column of the Schedule of the Act, namely,—

“May issue a Crown grant on or after the 1st day of June, 1882, to the Mayor, Councillors, and Burgesses of the Borough of Onehunga, in trust for the inhabitants of the Borough of Onehunga and the County of Eden, for all that parcel of land containing 47 acres, and comprising Lots 61, 44, 45, 46, 47, and 48, adjacent to the Town of Onehunga: for a rifle-range, cemetery, and place of recreation, in such proportions as he may think fit, unless Parliament shall otherwise determine.”

Under that Act the Crown grant was issued, and under the authority of that grant and the Act of Parliament the Mayor and Borough

Council proceeded with the establishment of a burying-ground there; but a little before or about this same time a dispute arose between the Borough Council and a contractor, and penalties on both sides had to be inflicted. In one case the borough had to pay £300, and finally the contractor had to have £700 or £800, he did not know which, deducted from the contract price; and in consequence of that dispute a feeling was created against the Mayor of that day (Captain Yates) by the contractor's friends; and, to punish him for this and other matters, proceedings were taken to close this new cemetery—first, by summons against the undertaker of a funeral, then against the gravedigger, in the Magistrate's Court; and finally the matter was taken into the Supreme Court, on the ground that the cemetery was within the town boundaries. He had no doubt any gentleman who chose to oppose the measure would lay stress on the fact that the Supreme Court had granted an injunction against burying the dead in this particular spot. But he did maintain that on that occasion the merits of the case were in no way gone into. There was no intervention of a jury; there was no inspection of the premises; there was no report made as to the suitability of the ground; but the single issue put before the Judge was this: Was this particular ground within the town boundary? The decision, of course, was that it was actually within the existing town boundary; and an injunction was issued, and that injunction took effect, and would continue to have effect until such time as that House intervened and redressed the wrong that had been done. Now, honourable members who opposed this measure must make up their minds, if they opposed it, to say this: “We are determined to repudiate a solemn bargain; we are determined to set aside this Act which was passed; we are determined that a Crown grant is in this case a thing of no value.” Well, he did think the House would not long continue to leave such a grievance as he had depicted unredressed. The Town of Onehunga would never have surrendered its thousand acres were it not for the certainty of obtaining this cemetery near its own doors, which was given to it by Act of Parliament. The last time this matter was discussed by him in that House it was pointed out that the City of Auckland had established a burial-ground of its own, and which was available for Onehunga—how far, did honourable members think, from Onehunga? Eleven miles by road and fourteen miles by rail. He thought every one of ordinary feeling would agree that these poor people of Onehunga—for the population was almost exclusively composed of working-men—ought not to be required to bury their dead at such a distance away from their homes. He held that, where circumstances permitted, and no danger was likely to arise on sanitary grounds, the burial-ground ought to be near people's abodes; and he believed all the members of the House would respect that feeling of reverence which pervaded mankind in wishing to be able to tend the graves of their relatives—that child-

ren might be allowed the privilege of tending the graves of parents, and that mothers should not be debarred the melancholy privilege of scattering flowers and planting a few floral tributes of affection around the tombs of their lost ones. It would be a cruel thing to prescribe that burials must take place at such a distance, when, without injury to any one, burials might take place in ground reasonably convenient. He had no doubt they would be told another cemetery was recently made available at a short distance, a couple of miles away from the town, and situated beyond an arm of the sea; but he contended that the people, having set their hearts on having a cemetery near at hand, having surrendered the whole municipal endowment of a thousand acres for these forty-seven acres, had a right to appeal to the House, and to ask the House to see that the bargain made should be fulfilled—that the Act passed by that Parliament should not be set at naught, and that the people should not be deprived of the advantages which the Crown grant conferred. These were the general principles of the measure—the general reasons why he, representing that district, advocated it. He was aware that time was more limited than it used to be with regard to debates of this kind, and he was also aware that there were many other measures pressing on the House, and which, perhaps, might not have another chance of coming on. Therefore he would not wilfully trespass any longer on the time of the House; but he did appeal to the House to see that the intention of the previous House was fulfilled in this matter, and that this burial-ground, which was on a piece of land of forty-seven acres, not a town allotment of an acre or half-acre, and which was altogether isolated from the town—a mile away from the thickly-populated part—might be allowed to be used as a cemetery.

Mr. MITCHELSON begged to move, That progress be reported on this Bill, in order to prevent the blocking of Bills which are not so strongly opposed as this one will be. The Bill was a very old friend to many honourable members now in the House. He had consistently opposed this Bill on every occasion when it was brought before Parliament, and he saw no reason why the present Parliament should pass a Bill which had been so often rejected before. There was no doubt the honourable gentleman in charge of the Bill had made a most pathetic appeal to honourable members when asking them to allow this Bill to pass during the present session; and he had read a number of letters, or a petition signed by almost every clergyman in the Onehunga district, in favour of the passage of it. Honourable members were no doubt aware that under the existing law it was not possible to establish a cemetery within a borough, and he thought the Legislature did a very good thing in the interests of the colony in passing that enactment, because it must be borne in mind that the tendency now was to prevent the burial of the dead within populous centres, or centres likely to become so; and, although

the honourable gentleman had told them that the two cemeteries now existing were overcrowded, and that all persons buried in either the one or the other had to be buried according to the rites of a particular Church, and although he had also told them that the City of Auckland had established a cemetery some fourteen miles distant from Onehunga, still the honourable gentleman argued that it was not at all reasonable that the people of Onehunga should be asked to convey their dead such a long distance. Knowing the opposition that existed to this Bill, when in office he (Mr. Mitchelson) undertook to set apart a cemetery in the Mangare district, within two or three miles of the centre of this borough; and he chose the site himself. It was one of the most beautiful sites that could be selected for such a purpose. It had a stream of water running into the sea close by it; and surely honourable members must admit that two or two and a half miles along a level road was not a great distance to convey the dead. The honourable gentleman had told them that perhaps this argument would be made against this Bill, and he stated that to convey the dead to this particular place would necessitate the crossing of an arm of the sea, over which heavy gusts of wind blew. It was true the dead would have to be conveyed across an arm of the sea; but there was a very large and substantial bridge across it, with high railings, and it was impossible for any accident to take place. All the farmers in the Mangare district had to cross this Mangare Bridge almost daily to and fro in order to reach Onehunga or Auckland. The honourable gentleman also stated that if this Bill was not allowed to pass it would be committing a breach of faith with the Onehunga people, inasmuch as the Legislature had already passed an Act granting this reserve to the borough for cemetery purposes. If this Act had been passed in the ordinary form one would naturally say that was the case; but if honourable members turned up the Act they would find that it was a clause in a Special Powers and Contracts Act passed in 1881. A great number of the present members of the House did not understand what these Special Powers and Contracts Bills contained; and he might say these Bills were usually rushed through the House in the last few days of a session, and were full of jobs of every kind.

An Hon. MEMBER.—It was passed by the Atkinson Government.

Mr. MITCHELSON said he was aware that such Bills were passed by the Atkinson Government; and the honourable gentleman, the member for Tuapeka, who made that remark was also a member of a Government that passed a considerable number of these Bills; and two-thirds of the very last Bill of this nature, which contained more jobs than ever and was introduced by them, was rejected by the Legislative Council, and no Government had since made any attempt to reintroduce a Special Powers and Contracts Bill. The cemetery land set apart at Mangare contained between sixteen and seventeen acres. The

Sir Maurice O'Rorke

present Minister of Lands said that if the people of Onehunga were prepared to accept this he would alter the trust and give the Onehunga people a considerable amount of representation on the Board. Honourable members on reading the Act would see that the land was set apart for the Borough of Onehunga and the County of Eden. Nearly every local body in the County of Eden strenuously objected to the passing of this Bill. The last time this Bill was before the House they passed resolutions against it; and there had also been a petition from the Town of Onehunga stating that this Bill had not been before the present Borough Council of Onehunga, and that the present Mayor took it in hand practically without the consent of the Borough Council.

Sir MAURICE O'RORKE.—It was fully advertised; otherwise it could not now be under discussion in this House.

Mr. MITCHELSON admitted that it was advertised, but the present Bill was not before the Council of Onehunga. There was a considerable amount of opposition in Onehunga itself against the passing of this Bill. And he moved, That progress be reported, to allow other Bills to come on; because if progress was not reported there was not the slightest chance of those Bills being dealt with to-night.

Mr. E. M. SMITH hoped the House would not consent to report progress, notwithstanding the statement made by the honourable gentleman who had just addressed the Committee. He had no desire to support a Bill which would allow a cemetery to be within the precincts of a borough where there was a large population, or where there was likely to be a large population. Now, as an outsider, he might say that, when he was up at Auckland, knowing that this dispute existed, he, like a practical man, went down to Onehunga and had a look at this cemetery. He wanted to tell the House the position. The position was as the honourable and distinguished member in charge of the Bill had stated it to be. This cemetery was surrounded about two-thirds by water. A number of people were already buried there.

An Hon. MEMBER.—How many?

Mr. E. M. SMITH could not say, but he saw tombstones there over the graves of Catholics, Presbyterians, and people of other denominations. The place was very nicely fenced, and had ornamental gates, and altogether a large amount of money had been expended upon it. This was, to his mind, a fit and proper place—and a very good place too—for a cemetery. Now, there was a recreation-ground between the town and this cemetery reserve. There was also a railway and a road; and it did not matter how Onehunga would grow, if they allowed this site to be used as a cemetery, the people living near it would not in any way be injuriously affected by it. He simply made this statement as one who was not interested in Onehunga, but merely because he liked fair-play. He wished to give the House the experience he had gained from his visit to the place. These were the simple facts, and he would defy any honourable mem-

ber to dispute his statement. Whether the cemetery at the other side of the river would do for the Onehunga people was quite another question, but he said, as an unprejudiced representative of the people, that any representative who visited the place specified in this Bill would find it was suitable. He believed there was a large amount of jealousy involved in this matter, but he had no hesitation in saying that of all places in the district this was the one fit and proper place for a cemetery. He would therefore support the Bill.

Mr. MASSEY would just like to say that, in supporting the amendment, he was very sorry to find himself in opposition to the passing of a measure in which two such distinguished individuals, and for whom personally he had so much respect, as the honourable member for Manukau and the lady Mayor of Onehunga were interested. He himself happened to live very near to Onehunga, and therefore he happened to know something of the circumstances. He felt it to be his duty to give the Committee the benefit of such information as he possessed on the subject. In the first place, this piece of land was Crown-granted not only to the people of Onehunga, but to the inhabitants of the County of Eden. The Governor, under the Special Powers and Contracts Act of 1881,—

"May issue a Crown grant on or after the 1st day of June, 1882, to the Mayor, Councillors, and Burgesses of the Borough of Onehunga, in trust for the inhabitants of the Borough of Onehunga and the County of Eden, for all that piece of land, containing 47 acres, and comprising Lots 61, 44, 45, 46, 47, and 48, adjacent to the Town of Onehunga: for a rifle-range, cemetery, and place of recreation, in such proportions as he may think fit, unless Parliament shall otherwise determine."

Now, he knew as a fact that the inhabitants of the County of Eden were opposed to the purpose of this Bill, and they had never been consulted. Seeing that they were part owners of the land, he thought they should have been consulted before the measure was introduced. Then, the people of Onehunga themselves were not unanimous on the measure. When it came before the Borough Council last year it was only carried by a majority of one, and at different times they had had petitions before the House signed by hundreds of the people of Onehunga protesting against this piece of land being used for the purpose intended. Unfortunately these petitions had disappeared; but, at any rate, he had one of them which was signed by persons living in Onehunga, and amongst them by Captain Yates, the husband of the present lady Mayor of Onehunga. This was what it said:—

"That your petitioners are burgesses of the Borough of Onehunga aforesaid, and that their respective names appear as such upon the current Burgess-roll. That your petitioners are of opinion that the piece of ground adjoining the Recreation Reserve, originally granted to the Borough of Onehunga and County of Eden for the purpose of a cemetery (but which piece of ground has never been used as such), is un-

suitable for such purpose for many reasons, amongst which are the following: (a) It is situated in close proximity to the springs from which it is proposed to obtain a water-supply for the Borough of Onehunga; (b) it closely adjoins the recreation-reserve; (c) it is anticipated that in a few years there will be a large industrial population in the immediate neighbourhood of the reserve; (d) owing to the character of the ground, only a small portion of the ten acres set apart would be actually available for the purpose of interment."

This petition was signed by, he thought, between two and three hundred of the people of Onehunga. Then, when this land was opened up for the purposes of a cemetery by the Borough Council of Onehunga, some of the people applied to the Supreme Court and obtained an injunction from Mr. Justice Conolly to prevent any further burials taking place there. The Cemeteries Act provided that no cemetery should be opened within the boundaries of a borough. Now, this piece of land was within the Borough of Onehunga. It was, practically, a small borough, and he thought he was right in saying this land was only some half a mile, or, at most, three-quarters of a mile, from the centre of the borough. Onehunga must in time be the centre of a very numerous population, and if it was wrong for other boroughs to have cemeteries inside their boundaries it could scarcely be right in the case of Onehunga. The most serious objection, however, to the proposal was that the placing of the cemetery in this position would involve the danger of pollution to the springs from which the people of Onehunga and the surrounding districts derived their water-supply. The springs at Onehunga were amongst the best to be found in the colony, both for quality and quantity. The water came to the surface in different places over a considerable area of land, and the piece of land in question was within this area. There were springs on both sides of it, and it was the opinion of scientific people that these springs were connected beneath the surface. The soil was porous and volcanic in character, so that there was great danger of these springs being contaminated. A letter appeared in one of the Auckland papers some time ago from a resident of Onehunga, and from it he would take the opportunity of reading a few lines. It said, —

"The Onehunga springs constitute the most magnificent water-supply conceivable, and are destined hereafter to carry health, comfort, and cleanliness to a vast population. When the country becomes filled up and built over, the waterless regions round about Mount Smart and Penrose will receive their supply from this source; and Epsom, with its ultimately large population, is now in treaty with the authorities of Onehunga for water. Newmarket, too, and probably Auckland, will yet require, at no distant period, to augment their present limited supply from the inexhaustible Onehunga springs. Under these circumstances, what can be more important than that a vigilant watch should be placed over, and a jealous

protection thrown around, this most valuable gift of nature? All possibility of pollution should be contemplated with horror; the most remote chance of defilement should be removed far away. Yet what is it that we hear proposed by a section of the Onehunga people? Without consulting competent authority, without a test of any kind whatever, without argument, or information on which alone argument can be based, without reference to anything beyond the narrow limits of the light shed by their own jack-o'-lantern enthusiasm, these gentlemen of Onehunga walk over the ground and declare to be 'all right' that which will in the end probably prove all wrong, and detrimental—possibly destructive—to thousands yet unborn, not to mention those already in the flesh. They propose to open a cemetery dangerously near to the great subterranean water reservoir out of which the springs flow. As this arrangement is one for all time, let us carry our thoughts forward to fifty years hence, when Onehunga will be a large town, and perhaps fifty thousand people will be drinking of the water of the springs. In the meantime, as many, possibly, will have been buried in the proposed cemetery. Does it not approach an act of insanity to rush into a project fraught probably with the direst consequences, and certainly one that will awaken a sickening suspicion every time one drinks a glass of water?"

That was the opinion of a resident of the Borough of Onehunga. Now, besides the reasons he had mentioned, there were others, though probably minor ones. For instance, there was the fact that the remaining portion of the reserve, about twenty-seven and a half acres, had been reserved for the purpose of a recreation-ground and rifle-range. He thought honourable members would agree that the reports of rifles and the shouts of people assembled to witness a football-match were scarcely the associations one would like to have in the neighbourhood when funerals and funeral services were going on. There was no necessity for this measure, as there was the piece of land referred to by the honourable member for Eden, which was already opened for the purposes of a cemetery, at Mangare, about two and a half miles distant from Onehunga. It consisted of about sixteen or seventeen acres, and it was granted for the purpose at the time the honourable member was Native Minister, at the suggestion of himself (Mr. Massey) and one or two other individuals in the place. This cemetery, of which he happened to be one of the trustees, had been fenced and surveyed into burial lots, and therefore in every sense was fit for the burial of the dead. The people of Onehunga had the right to use it if they felt inclined. It was within two and a half miles of Onehunga. The people of Auckland had to take their dead to Waikomiti, a distance of ten miles from the city, over a very rough road; so that, compared with Auckland, the people of Onehunga had nothing to complain of. To summarise very briefly, he objected to the Bill because, in the

Mr. Massey

first place, the people of the County of Eden were part owners of the land in question, and were very numerous as compared with the people of Onehunga, and yet had not been consulted in the matter. He objected to it also because there was a possible danger of polluting the springs. He did not think it right to put Onehunga in a different position from that of other boroughs, or to make any exception in its case. For the reasons he had given, he opposed the Bill, and supported the motion of the honourable member for Eden.

Mr. CROWTHER said he also had been instructed to oppose the Bill. He made this statement because he believed the honourable gentleman in charge of the Bill had also got his instructions. He thought if that honourable gentleman had followed his good sense he would have introduced the Bill in another shape: that is, he would have asked for this allotment to be declared an endowment for Onehunga, without attaching to it any requirement in connection with a cemetery. If he had done that he would have had a very much better chance of getting the Bill through. He was very much surprised to hear the honourable member for New Plymouth—who seemed to know everything, from one end of the colony to the other—talking about what he knew nothing about. The honourable member said the district was a thinly-populated one. The promoter of the Bill knew very well that there was a population all the way from the Ellerslie Railway-station right to Onehunga, and the cemetery was about midway between those two places. About midway between the two places was a woollen-factory. It was quite true, as the promoter of the Bill said, that the lands did not go to the town, but it was also true that the town went to the lands. If Onehunga was to be a town of any size it must grow in that direction—it was the most favourable direction. But, under any circumstances, Onehunga was as near to Waikomiti, or nearly so, as was the City of Auckland, and, under those circumstances, it had no greater disadvantages than Auckland had itself. But setting that on one side, without any reference to the cemetery alluded to by the last speaker, there was another cemetery within six or seven miles—at Remuera. He thought, therefore, that honourable members would agree that there were cemeteries enough, at any rate, for some time to come. Again, it was absolutely against all common usage to have a cemetery anywhere in the same locality as a water-supply. In connection with the cemetery at Auckland there was a pumping-station, and there happened to be 100 acres of a private estate adjoining that pumping-station; and at one time there was a syndicate that were going to milk the Corporation by buying the land and reselling it to the Corporation in consequence of what was then called the sentiment that, if there was any manufacture of any description put on this 100 acres, it might contaminate the water-supply. The same argument applied to this Bill. The question arose that, if the House passed this Bill, the Onehunga Borough might

by-and-by have to buy up industries and stop their operations, even although it might not damage the water-supply. In his opinion this was not the right sort of place for the cemetery; it was too near Onehunga and too near Ellerslie; it was at the very corner of them all, and they were all growing districts. At the time mentioned by the introducer of the Bill one could travel from Newmarket to Onehunga without seeing a house, but now almost every section of land in that distance was cut up into building sections, and as soon as the building trade revived, it would be bought up and built on, and the cemetery would be in the midst of a township. He did not know that he should have opposed the Bill if the application had been simply for an endowment, but he was bound to oppose it as a cemetery site.

Mr. THOMPSON said he was personally not interested in the question, but he had received a number of letters from settlers asking him to oppose the Bill. He was surprised at the petition presented by the honourable member for Franklin. He could not understand why clergymen always made up their minds to run against public opinion. They were one hundred years behind the times on all questions of this kind. What was the position of this cemetery? The people of Onehunga a few years ago, to complicate matters, went and, contrary to the law, interred some dozen bodies in the cemetery. An information was laid against them. The case was brought up in the local Court. The two Justices who presided dismissed the case. If his information was correct, the honourable gentleman in charge of the Bill was one of the Justices. Finding that the local Court would not deal fairly with the matter, the case was taken to the Supreme Court, and an injunction taken out against them, and all burials were stopped. Ever since then they had come to Parliament year after year, endeavouring to get a Bill passed through the House to enable them to bury their dead in the reserve. If they had no other place in which to bury their dead he could excuse them. What the honourable gentleman said with reference to the old cemeteries was, he believed, perfectly correct—he believed they were crowded; but a new cemetery had been laid out within two or two and a half miles of the centre of the borough, but they had up to the present time refused to bury their dead there, still hoping to get such a Bill as this passed through the House. So far as he understood, the opponents of this Bill had no desire whatever to interfere with the right and title of the people of Onehunga to this piece of ground as a recreation-reserve; but there was a universal desire amongst the people of all the surrounding districts not to have any portion of this reserve converted into a cemetery. The honourable gentleman next talked about the danger of having to pass what he called a "storm-swept branch of the harbour" to get to this new cemetery; but he took good care not to inform the House that across that storm-swept branch of the harbour there was a bridge constructed at a

cost of more than £18,000—constructed out of money which was taken in a very improper way from the North of Auckland, and which was intended to be devoted to the construction of roads there. It was a notorious fact that Onehunga was one of the most unhealthy townships in New Zealand. During the last year or two it had been a hotbed of typhoid fever; yet, in order to secure the burial-fees, it was proposed still further to pollute the water-supply. If the House passed this Bill it would inflict a lasting injury upon the people of Onehunga and the surrounding districts. He trusted that progress would be reported.

Mr. TANNER had not been instructed either to support or oppose the Bill. He took no instructions from any person as to his conduct in voting in the House. Neither was he possessed of local knowledge such as that possessed by other honourable members from the northern electorates. But he had done the next best thing: he had gone through the process generally known among honourable members as "digging," and had collected all the information that he could lay his hands on upon the subject, with the result that he had not been able to keep himself from coming to a certain conclusion, which would cause him to support the motion to report progress. He would not for a moment go into the various arguments which had been urged by other speakers; but it appeared to him that there were two or three points which had not been mentioned, and which it was, perhaps, as well to put on record. This was the first Monday on which the House had sat this session, and honourable members were asked, practically, to work overtime that evening in order to break the law of the land: there was no question about that. They were asked to support a proposition to establish a cemetery in a small borough little more than a square mile in extent and carrying three thousand people, in direct violation of an existing statute. The place was already provided with a second cemetery outside the borough, and with a third at a little distance away. No member from the provincial district had spoken in favour of the Bill; and its only supporter, the honourable member for New Plymouth, lived one hundred and fifty miles away from the locality affected.

Mr. T. MACKENZIE thought a clear case had been made out against the Bill. They had had that measure before Parliament every session since he had been a member of the House, and every session it had been thrown out. It seemed to him that the main objection to the Bill was that they ought to prevent cemeteries from being opened in municipalities. The Act of 1882 was passed for that purpose. From time to time they had had measures before the House advocating the setting-aside of that Act. He had been very much concerned in opposing a Bill which had been introduced on several occasions with the object of alienating a portion of the Town Belt of Dunedin. They were fortunately successful in opposing that measure, and so prevented even the suburbs of a city from being made into a cemetery. His

chief reason for opposing the Bill was that it attempted to set aside an Act of Parliament passed for the purpose of keeping our cities wholesome.

Mr. REEVES said, as to the merits of the Bill, he agreed with the honourable member for Clutha. He thought a very strong case ought to be made out before Parliament could allow a reserve inside a borough to be devoted to the purpose of a cemetery. He remembered the battle of the Dunedin Cemetery Reserve, and a very vigorous and interesting battle it was; but a number of gentlemen, who many of them were natives of the colony, set their faces against the idea of having cemeteries close to the centres of population or actually in them. As a matter of principle, he thought, unless the member in charge of such a Bill made out an overwhelming case in favour of the measure, honourable members ought to set their faces against the measure, no matter what the local feeling might be, on the general principle that a borough was not a fit place for interment of the dead.

Mr. LAWRY said, although he introduced the Bill and moved its second reading, he did not think it followed as a matter of course that he was going to support the Bill on the present occasion. He thought he had made it quite clear to the House when he took charge of the Bill that he did so out of courtesy to Mr. Speaker, who would deal with the matter when the Bill came into Committee. He would not vote for the Bill; but, out of justice to the honourable gentleman who had real charge of it, he thought it was right to wipe away a certain amount of misapprehension that had been shown by previous speakers. It had been stated, in the first place, that the water-supply of Onehunga would be contaminated if this piece of land were used as a burial-ground; but, as a matter of fact, the springs that supplied the people of Onehunga and would supply the County of Eden with water were situated 250ft. higher than the proposed cemetery, and therefore that argument would not apply, and neither the water-supply of Onehunga or of the County of Eden would be affected. It had been further stated that the site of this cemetery was unsuitable for the purpose for which it was proposed to be taken, on account of its rocky formation. That statement was without foundation, as he believed it could well be used for the purpose for which it was intended. The honourable member for Eden had consistently opposed this Bill and Bills of a similar nature, but he took leave to say that the honourable gentleman himself and the Government of which he was a member were wholly responsible for the present trouble. At the time the Borough of Onehunga passed a resolution in favour of taking this piece of land for the purpose of a cemetery the honourable gentleman's Government was written to, and a reply was sent by Sir Frederick Whitaker to the effect that the Government would not object to the Onehunga people using this piece of land as a cemetery.

Mr. MITCHELSON.—When was that?

Mr. Thompson

Mr. LAWRY.—In 1881.

Mr. MITCHELSON.—I was not in the House at that time.

Mr. LAWRY would, then, beg the honourable gentleman's pardon. The Attorney-General at that time should not have permitted a violation of the law to take place. The honourable member for Clutha had said that the House should not permit any interference with the colonial statute dealing with these matters; but, as a matter of fact, the honourable gentleman himself had assisted in violating this very statute. He gave a vote on a certain Bill in 1889 for the violation of this great principle that he was now advocating, and which was represented on that occasion. A late member for Wellington Suburbs, Mr. Izard, brought in a Bill to establish a cemetery in a borough, in direct violation of this great colonial statute to which reference had been made. He referred to the cemetery at Karori. And who voted with the mover of the Bill on that occasion? Why, the honourable member for Clutha, who now stated that his objection to the present Bill was that it violated a great colonial statute. The Cemeteries Act provided that no cemetery should be established within the bounds of a borough; and he would give honourable members a little ancient history of what took place on the occasion to which he referred. The honourable member for Bruce was fighting against the extension of the cemetery bounds in Dunedin, and was to have assisted him to kill the Onehunga Bill on the condition that he helped him to kill the Dunedin Bill, also other Bills of the like nature; but when the division should have taken place on that Bill he was conspicuous by his absence, and he (Mr. Lawry) regarded himself as having been sold. What had those honourable gentlemen done on that occasion? While fighting against one Bill because it violated a great colonial statute, they had helped the honourable member for Wellington Suburbs to smuggle a clause into the Wellington Empowering Bill which practically violated the great principle, and the House knew nothing about it. That clause gave the Corporation of Wellington power to provide a cemetery at Karori. In the face of this, the honourable member for Clutha and the honourable member for Bruce opposed the present Bill, because they said it violated a great colonial statute. The insertion of that clause in the Wellington Act showed that honourable members were upon that occasion guilty of a great dereliction of duty. Of course, he (Mr. Lawry) would vote for the motion to report progress.

Mr. BUTTON desired to place before the House another view of the case that had not been referred to by other honourable members. He agreed with all the main arguments used against the measure, but he would like to point out that the piece of land referred to had been discharged by Act of Parliament from the Trust so far as it related to a cemetery. Clause 49 of "The Cemeteries Act, 1882," prohibited cemeteries from being established in any borough, and clause 50 went on to discharge

from the reservations for cemeteries any piece of land in the position of the piece of land under discussion. He understood that in 1882 this piece of land had not been used for a burying-ground; consequently by the Act he had referred to it had been discharged from the purpose for which it might have been used, or for which it might have been set apart under the Special Powers and Contracts Act of 1881. The Act of 1882 was quite clear: it declared that no burial-ground should be established within a borough; and it went on to discharge any reservations that had been made for the purpose and were not used. Consequently they were quite free with regard to this piece of land, which had been discharged by Act of Parliament from the Act under which it was permitted that the Crown grant might be issued. The Act vested the land in the Borough of Onehunga, and declared that it was to be used in such proportions as the Governor might think fit, unless Parliament otherwise determined. The year following Parliament did otherwise determine, and discharged this piece of land, with all others similarly situated, from being a reserve for cemetery purposes.

Mr. COLLINS had paid very close attention to the discussion upon the Bill, and it appeared to him that those honourable members who were mainly interested in the matter were very much divided upon it, those who posed as authorities being as much divided as the people in the locality to which the Bill referred. That being the case, they had to dismiss the authorities and the people of the locality, and form a conclusion upon general principles. It appeared to him that it was quite undesirable that burying-places should be allowed to exist within the boundaries of a borough. Honourable members who were acquainted with the places of burial in older countries would bear testimony to the fact that a very great deal of money had been expended, and very much trouble taken, in closing many of the burial-places situated within the limits of boroughs. That being so, why should they allow this locality to run a danger of this kind in the future? These reasons, to his mind, were quite sufficient to justify their opposing this Bill. As a matter of fact, when once a place became devoted to burial purposes, certain sentiments and memories sprang up, which would tend to prevent that place from being closed as a burial-place, even though it should become a menace to the health of the locality. He thought they should endeavour to prevent a possible occurrence of this kind by a refusal to pass this particular measure.

Mr. ALLEN was strongly against these cemeteries being placed close to towns. He did not think one need go much further than the City of Wellington to see how serious an injury might be done by permitting a cemetery to be placed within the precincts of a city. No one could tell but that, within a few years, Onehunga might become as large a place as Wellington, and then the cemetery which his honourable friend wished to place there would be the centre of a large Borough of Onehunga.

and he was sure his honourable friend would then regret his action. What had been said by the honourable member for Waitemata and by other Auckland members should be sufficient to prevent any one from supporting the honourable gentleman in this measure. The idea that the very water that the people had to drink was to be defiled by the bodies of the people interred in the cemetery was so gross that he wondered the honourable gentleman had the pluck to bring it before the House at all. However, no one knew what influence might have been brought to bear upon this matter; but he thought, in the interests of humanity, the honourable gentleman ought to cast aside those influences; and he thought the House ought to help him to do it as soon as possible. He considered the House should report progress, and get on with some of the more important business, as this was only waste of time.

Sir MAURICE O'RORKE said there were so many extraordinary and fallacious arguments launched against the Bill that he really thought none of them had taken effect until the last speaker, the honourable member for Bruce, addressed the House. He found then that the honourable member for Waitemata had made a disciple. The honourable member for Waitemata, for a young member, he thought, attempted to play upon the credulity of the House in a manner that an old member would not have ventured to do. He launched forth about the terrible afflictions that were to come upon the people of Onehunga from putting the burying-ground where this Bill proposed to put it. He spoke of how the water would be polluted, and he made a disciple in the honourable member for Bruce. But what did this Bill propose? At the present moment, and for the last forty years, two burying-grounds were in existence, situated within a few chains of the water-supply of the Town of Onehunga, and the Bill before the Committee proposed to close these two burying-grounds and to put a burying-ground nearly a mile away from the springs; and then it was said he was going to pollute the water-supply of Onehunga! Then, the honourable member for Waitemata said this was in defiance of the wishes of the whole community of the County of Eden. Why, this Bill had been absolutely before the country since the month of May. In the month of May he received a letter from the Town Clerk of the Onehunga Municipal Council saying,—

"I have the honour, by direction, to forward a resolution which was passed, at a special meeting, by the Onehunga Borough Council last evening—namely, 'That Sir G. M. O'Rorke be respectfully requested to draft a Bill and present it at the next meeting of Parliament to legalise the use of the Waikaraka cemetery.'"

The honourable member for Marsden stated that he was the recipient of a number of objections, but he had not put a single one of these numerous objections before the House either by letter or by name; and why an honourable member who lived seventy miles

away from Onehunga should be made the recipient of these objections it was for himself to explain. If the people of the Epsom district, which he (Sir Maurice O'Rorke) represented as much as he did Onehunga, had any objection to the proposal, whom would they have called upon to defend their interests more than the member they sent to this House? Not a syllable had ever been expressed to him either by voice or in writing by the people of Epsom against this Bill. If arguments and wild statements of this kind were allowed to weigh, then there was no use in members bringing forward a measure basing their arguments on truthful statements of fact. The object of the Bill was what he had been trying for years and years to effect—namely, to get those crowded burying-grounds, which were within a few chains of the water-supply, closed, and a cemetery placed where the House, with a full knowledge of all the circumstances, decided to place it by the Act passed for that purpose in 1881. He must not omit to touch on the argument of the honourable member for Auckland City (Mr. Button), because, that honourable gentleman being a gentleman of high legal attainments, the House generally accepted his opinion, and in this instance might be carried away by it. He said that this cemetery was only reserved as such unless Parliament should otherwise determine. If that was the real state of the case, he (Sir Maurice O'Rorke) would not have a leg to stand on. But what the law said was that the grant of the land was to issue on or after the 1st June, 1882, unless Parliament should otherwise determine. This enactment was passed after a long contest in this House—and the remnant of his opponents were still there! This occurred when they were on the eve of a general election. This Crown grant was not to issue until the 1st of June in the following year, so that members of the new House should have an opportunity of objecting to it if they desired. And what was the objection raised? A round-robin was got up by the Auckland members, and sent to the Government, calling on them privately to stop the issue of this grant. But the Government of the day said, "If you have any objections to it, you must make them in the face of Parliament and the country, and not clandestinely." During all that session of 1882 he sat waiting for the objections to be put forward, but no objection was ever put forward; and, in consequence, the grant was issued. That was the law—that the grant should be withheld until another session took place, when it was to issue unless the new Parliament determined otherwise before the 1st June, 1882. Parliament met on the 18th May, 1882, and, not having ever determined otherwise, the grant was issued, and was now held by the Borough Council of Onehunga. Now, it was for this reason that he appealed to this House: Whilst the Act of 1881 gave them the cemetery, the Act of 1882 almost surreptitiously deprived them of it. If honourable members would read the general Cemeteries Act of 1882 they would see that it named particularly

Mr. Allen

every Act under which cemeteries were established—thirty-three Acts in all, which were repealed by it. It carefully named them all, and as carefully abstained from naming the Act under which the Onehunga Cemetery was established; and he held that the Onehunga people, seeing that no reference was made to their cemetery in the schedule of the Acts repealed, were perfectly justified in supposing that the will of Parliament was not, surreptitiously, set aside. Then, again, the honourable member for Clutha, he thought, said that this measure had been brought forward year after year, and had always been rejected by the House. All he (Sir Maurice O'Rorke) could say was this: that never whilst he was a member of the House did the House reject any measure of this kind. What did they do in 1887? In spite of thirteen Auckland members going into one lobby against him, and only one Auckland member going with him, forty-three members of the House in all siding with him, they passed the measure, and sent it to the Legislative Council; and it was because the opponents of the measure in this House were strong enough to get it thrown out in the Legislative Council that he had to come forward that night to claim the protection of the representatives of the people against the nominee Chamber. The House passed the measure in 1887, enabling the Borough Council of Onehunga to comply with the law of 1882; and they merely asked that they should be allowed to raise the sum of £500 to £1,000 on the security of the rents they were receiving from the endowment, in order to purchase a piece of ground outside the boundary, but absolutely nearer to the heart of the Town of Onehunga. The whole matter would have been settled had it not been for the opposition of the Auckland members of that day, which induced the Legislative Council to throw out the measure. It really did not matter which way they proposed to deal with this question of the cemetery, whether inside or outside the town boundaries, whatever they did for the benefit of Onehunga in the matter would have the Auckland phalanx arrayed against it. Therefore it was that he rejoiced that he could appeal to the impartial judgment of other members from the array they would see go into the lobby against him from the Auckland side. He maintained that it was the House compelled the delay of the opening of the cemetery on one occasion by withholding the issue of the grant until after the 1st June, 1882; but when he brought forward the measure in 1887 they passed it by such a substantial majority as would have settled the matter had it not been for the interposition of the Legislative Council, which on some frivolous pretext threw it out. The honourable member for Waitemata laid great stress on the wrong done to the County of Eden. What wrong was being done? They must not be led to suppose that this cemetery was for the sole and exclusive benefit of Onehunga; the only exclusive connection Onehunga had with it was that it bore the whole of the expense. It had fenced the

cemetery, improved it, laid out £400 on it, and then the County of Eden and the public at large were invited to use it as a burying-ground. It was not intended, and could not be used, exclusively as a burial-place for the Town of Onehunga, but for the public at large. That was the wrong done to the County of Eden; that county had not been called on to contribute one penny of the expense. The honourable gentleman (Mr. Massey) read what he said was a mutilated portion of the petition presented to the House seven years ago; but what was the petition in favour of? It certainly was not in favour of the cemetery being established on this reserve, but it was in favour of having the cemetery placed elsewhere, so that a racecourse then in existence might be perpetuated over this ground. That was the great argument brought forward, and there was at the time a difference of opinion whether it would not be advisable to establish a racecourse there permanently, and on that occasion a petition was sent forward for the purpose of keeping the cemetery away from the racing-ground. That was the argument used then; but the Onehunga people had long since seen the error of their ways, and had ceased to desire that these forty-seven acres should be used as a racecourse. That was seven years ago, and the whole thing would have been settled long ago had it not been for the action of the Legislative Council. He hoped he had relieved the minds of members from the apprehension that great danger was going to accrue to the springs. The object of the Bill was to move the burial-ground from very close proximity to the springs—absolutely the ground was sloping down from the old burial-grounds to the present source of the water-supply for the town—and to put it at a distant part outside the original limits of the town, and at a place perfectly isolated, and surrounded on three sides by water. He was willing to accept the vote of the Committee, and, of course, if the decision was that progress should be reported that day he should bow to that decision, and should be glad that other members were not retarded in pushing forward their Bills. If the House was now ready for a division he, for one, was prepared to come to it. He would not weary honourable members further, but would leave the question for the decision of the House that day, and await his chance of better success another day.

The Committee divided on the question, "That progress be reported."

AYES, 30.

Bell	Harris	Pinkerton
Buchanan	Lang	Russell, G. W.
Buddo	Lawry	Russell, W. R.
Cadman	Mackenzie, T.	Smith, G. J.
Collins	Massey	Stout
Crowther	McKenzie, R.	Tanner
Duncan	McNab	Thompson.
Duthie	Millar	<i>Tellers.</i>
Earnshaw	Mitchelson	Allen
Fraser	Newman	Button.
Green		

NOES, 20.

Buick	Larnach	O'Regan
Carnell	Mackintosh	O'Rorke
Carroll	Maslin	Pirani
Hogg	McGuire	Wilson.
Houston	McLachlan	<i>Tellers.</i>
Hutchison, W.	Meredith	Graham
Joyce	Morrison	Smith, E. M.

Majority for, 10.

Progress reported.

WELLINGTON CITY DRAINAGE EMPOWERING BILL.

IN COMMITTEE.

Clause 24.—Council may borrow on security of moneys payable by owners.

Mr. MILLAR moved, That the words "not otherwise" be struck out in the line "the provisions of that Act shall not otherwise apply to such borrowing."

The Committee divided on the question, "That the words proposed to be omitted stand part of the clause."

AYES, 37.

Allen	Green	Pinkerton
Bell	Hall-Jones	Pirani
Buddo	Hogg	Reeves
Buick	Joyce	Russell, G. W.
Button	Lang	Russell, W. R.
Carnell	Larnach	Smith, G. J.
Carroll	Mackenzie, T.	Stout
Collins	Maslin	Tanner
Crowther	McGowan	Wilson.
Duthie	McKenzie, R.	
Earnshaw	McNab	<i>Tellers.</i>
Fraser	Meredith	Buchanan
Graham	Newman	Mitchelson.

NOES, 3.

Mackintosh.

*Tellers.*O'Regan
Seddon.

PAIRS.

<i>For.</i>	<i>Against.</i>
Carncross	Stevens
Heke	Harris
Steward.	Millar.

Majority for, 34.

Amendment negatived.

Bill reported.

On the question, That the Bill be now read a third time,

Mr. SEDDON said that before the Bill was read a third time it was due to the honourable member for Inangahua and to himself to state a circumstance that happened in connection with a division that took place in Committee, in order that it might be noted and recorded in *Hansard*. The honourable member for Inangahua was asked by a member who had to leave the House, he being "paired," to demand a division. In accordance with this promise he called for a division. There was therefore a difficulty in getting some one to "tell" with the honourable member for Inangahua. He considered that it was a matter of courtesy

that should always be extended to any member of the House, and, as it was his practice to extend this courtesy whenever needed, he (Mr. Seddon) agreed to "tell" with the honourable member on that occasion. There was a large principle involved in the motion, as it proposed to refer the question of additional burdens and additional taxation to the ratepayers; but he himself considered that, as the rate of interest was reduced to 5 per cent., the Bill should be allowed to pass. That was as far as he was concerned. At the same time, he would extend to every member of the House the courtesy he extended to the honourable member for Inangahua.

Bill read a third time.

WAIRARAPA HOSPITAL DISTRICT BILL.

IN COMMITTEE.

Clause 1.—Short title.

Sir R. STOUT moved, That the Chairman do leave the chair.

The Committee divided.

AYES, 24.

Allen	Hall-Jones	Pinkerton
Bell	Hutchison, G.	Reeves
Button	Hutchison, W.	Smith, G. J.
Carroll	Joyce	Tanner
Crowther	Maslin	Wilson.
Duthie	McNab	<i>Tellers.</i>
Earnshaw	Morrison	Collins
Graham	Newman	Stout.
Green		

NOES, 21.

Buchanan	Kelly, W.	Smith, E. M.
Buddo	Mackenzie, T.	Thompson
Buick	Mackintosh	Ward
Cadman	Massey	Willis.
Hall	O'Regan	<i>Tellers.</i>
Harris	Pirani	Lang
Hogg	Saunders	Meredith.
Houston		

PAIRS.

<i>For.</i>	<i>Against.</i>
Duncan	McKenzie, R.
McGowan.	McLachlan.

Majority for, 3.

Motion agreed to.

DUNEDIN PUBLIC ABATTOIRS BILL.

IN COMMITTEE.

Clause 1.—Short title.

Mr. MORRISON moved, That the Chairman do leave the chair.

The Committee divided.

AYES, 20.

Buchanan	Hogg	Meredith
Buick	Hutchison, G.	Pirani
Button	Lang	Smith, E. M.
Collins	Lawry	Ward.
Duncan	Massey	<i>Tellers.</i>
Green	McKenzie, R.	Morrison
Harris	McLachlan	Tanner.

NOES, 20.

Bell	Cadman	Crowther
Buddo	Carnell	Duthie

Earnshaw	Maslin	Smith, G. J.
Fraser	McNab	Stout.
Graham	Mitchelson	<i>Tellers.</i>
Joyce	O'Regan	Allen
Mackintosh	Pinkerton	Mackenzie, T.

PAIR.

<i>For.</i>	<i>Against.</i>
Steward.	Kelly, J. W.

The CHAIRMAN gave his casting-vote with the "Noes."

Motion negatived.

Mr. G. J. SMITH moved, That progress be reported.

Motion agreed to.

OCEAN BEACH PUBLIC DOMAIN BILL.

IN COMMITTEE.

Clause 1.—Short title.

Mr. ALLEN moved, That progress be reported.

The Committee divided.

AYES, 7.

Hogg	Meredith	<i>Tellers.</i>
Mackintosh	O'Regan.	Allen
Massey		Mitchelson.

NOES, 25.

Bell	Fraser	Pirani
Buddo	Graham	Reeves
Buick	Hall	Smith, G. J.
Button	Hall-Jones	Stout
Cadman	Harris	Tanner.
Carnell	Hutchison, W.	
Collins	Lawry	<i>Tellers.</i>
Crowther	Maslin	Earnshaw
Duthie	McNab	Pinkerton.

Majority against, 18.

Motion negatived.

Bill reported, and read a third time.

RIVERTON HARBOUR BOARD EMPOWERING BILL.

IN COMMITTEE.

Clause 1.—Short title.

Mr. EARNSHAW moved, That progress be reported.

The Committee divided.

AYES, 15.

Allen	Fraser	Smith, G. J.
Bell	Maslin	Tanner.
Buddo	Massey	<i>Tellers.</i>
Button	McNab	Earnshaw
Crowther	Meredith	Mitchelson.

NOES, 22.

Buick	Hall-Jones	Morrison
Cadman	Harris	O'Rourke
Carnell	Hogg	Pinkerton
Carroll	Hutchison, W.	Stevens.
Collins	Mackintosh	
Duncan	McGowan	<i>Tellers.</i>
Graham	McKenzie, R.	Joyce
Hall	McLachlan	Smith, E. M.

PAIRS.

<i>For.</i>	<i>Against.</i>
Pere	Mills
Saunders.	Steward.

Majority against, 7.

Motion negatived.

Mr. EARNSHAW moved to strike out the words "Harbour Board" from the title, with the view of inserting the word "Syndicate."

The Committee divided on the question, "That the words 'Harbour Board' stand part of the title."

AYES, 32.

Bell	Graham	Meredith
Buddo	Hall	Morrison
Buick	Hall-Jones	O'Regan
Button	Harris	Pinkerton
Cadman	Hogg	Pirani
Carnell	Hutchison, W.	Seddon
Carroll	Mackintosh	Smith, E. M.
Collins	McGowan	Tanner.
Crowther	McKenzie, R.	<i>Tellers.</i>
Duncan	McLachlan	Joyce
Fraser	McNab	Stevens.

NOES, 7.

Allen	Mitchelson	<i>Tellers.</i>
Duthie	Stout.	Earnshaw
Massey		Smith, G. J.

PAIRS.

<i>For.</i>	<i>Against.</i>
Mills	Pere
Steward.	Saunders.

Majority for, 25.

Words retained.

Sir R. STOUT moved, That progress be reported.

The Committee divided.

AYES, 16.

Allen	Earnshaw	Smith, G. J.
Bell	Fraser	Stout.
Buddo	Maslin	
Button	Massey	<i>Tellers.</i>
Collins	Meredith	McNab
Duthie	Mitchelson	Tanner.

NOES, 22.

Buick	Joyce	Seddon
Cadman	Mackintosh	Smith, E. M.
Carnell	McGowan	Stevens
Carroll	McKenzie, R.	Ward.
Hall	McLachlan	
Harris	Morrison	<i>Tellers.</i>
Hogg	O'Regan	Duncan
Hutchison, W.	Pirani	Lawry.

PAIRS.

<i>For.</i>	<i>Against.</i>
Pere	Mills
Saunders.	Steward.

Majority against, 6.

Motion negatived.

Clause 3.—Council authorised to negotiate with any company or body of persons either in Colony of New Zealand or the United Kingdom.

Sir R. STOUT moved to omit the word "either."

The Committee divided on the question,
"That the word proposed to be omitted stand
part of the clause."

AYES, 20.

Carnell	Lawry	Pinkerton
Carroll	Mackintosh	Pirani
Duncan	McGowan	Seddon
Hall	McKenzie, R.	Stevens.
Hall-Jones	McLachlan	<i>Tellers.</i>
Hutchison, W.	Morrison	Buick
Joyce	O'Regan	Hogg.

NOES, 16.

Bell	Maslin	Tanner
Buddo	McNab	Ward.
Button	Meredith	
Collins	Mitchelson	<i>Tellers.</i>
Duthie	Smith, G. J.	Allen
Fraser	Stout	Earnshaw.

PAIRS.

<i>For.</i>		<i>Against.</i>
Mills	Pere	
Steward.	Saunders.	

Majority for, 4.

Amendment negatived, and word retained.
Mr. MITCHELSON moved to report progress.

The Committee divided.

AYES, 16.

Allen	Earnshaw	Stout
Bell	Fraser	Tanner.
Buick	Maslin	
Button	McNab	<i>Tellers.</i>
Collins	Meredith	Buddo
Duthie	Mitchelson	Smith, G. J.

NOES, 21.

Cadman	Joyce	Pirani
Carnell	Lawry	Seddon
Carroll	Mackintosh	Smith, E. M.
Duncan	McGowan	Ward.
Hall	McKenzie, R.	<i>Tellers.</i>
Hall-Jones	McLachlan	O'Regan
Hogg	Morrison	Stevens.
Hutchison, W.		

PAIRS.

<i>For.</i>		<i>Against.</i>
Pere	Mills	
Saunders.	Steward.	

Majority against, 5.

Motion negatived.
Mr. R. MCKENZIE moved, That progress be reported.

The Committee divided.

AYES, 8.

Button	McNab	<i>Tellers.</i>
Earnshaw	O'Regan	Allen
Fraser	Stout.	Mitchelson.

NOES, 25.

Bell	Duncan	Lawry
Buddo	Duthie	Mackintosh
Cadman	Hall	Maslin
Carnell	Hall-Jones	McGowan
Carroll	Hogg	McLachlan
Collins	Joyce	Pirani

Seddon	Stevens	<i>Tellers.</i>
Smith, E. M.	Ward.	Morrison
Smith, G. J.		Pinkerton.

PAIRS.

<i>For.</i>		<i>Against.</i>
Pere		Mills
Saunders.		Steward.

Majority against, 17.

Motion negatived.
Clause 3 agreed to.
Bill reported.

ADJOURNMENT.

Mr. SEDDON moved, That the House do now adjourn.

The House divided.

AYES, 20.

Allen	Duthie	Seddon
Bell	Hall	Smith, G. J.
Buddo	Lawry	Stout
Button	Maslin	Ward.
Cadman	Mitchelson	<i>Tellers.</i>
Carroll	Pinkerton	McGowan
Collins	Pirani	Stevens.

NOES, 13.

Carnell	Joyce	Smith, E. M.
Duncan	Mackintosh	
Earnshaw	McKenzie, R.	<i>Tellers.</i>
Hall-Jones	Morrison	McLachlan
Hogg	O'Regan	McNab.

Majority for, 7.

Motion agreed to.

The House adjourned at ten minutes to six o'clock a.m.

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

Tuesday, 21st August, 1894.

First Readings—Wharekahika—Raukokore Postal Service—Equitable Insurance Company, Dunedin—Cheviot Estate—Municipal Petitions—Personal Explanation—Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Bill—Harbours Bill.

The Hon. the SPEAKER took the chair at half-past two o'clock p.m.

PRAYERS.

FIRST READINGS.

Ocean Beach Public Domain Bill, Timaru Harbour Reclamation Bill, Wellington City Drainage Empowering Bill, Timaru Harbour District Rating Bill, Havelock Commonage Bill.

WHAREKAHIKA-RAUKOKORE POSTAL SERVICE.

The Hon. Major WAHAWAHA asked the Colonial Secretary, Whether the Government will consider the advisability of opening postal communication between Wharekahika, at Hicks Bay, and Raukokore, near Cape Runaway? He wished to explain that the mail-service was open from Gisborne to Whareka-

hika, at Hicks Bay, about a hundred miles, and also from Opotiki as far as Raukokore, near Cape Runaway. Any letters posted at Gisborne for Raukokore had to go to Auckland first, and then come down the coast from there. The gap in the postal service was said to be about forty miles, and that was the only gap on the whole coast. What he wished was that the Government should extend the postal communication so that it might be continuous up the coast.

The Hon. Sir P. A. BUCKLEY said the information he had to give the honourable member was embodied in a memorandum from the Secretary to the Post Office to the Postmaster-General, in which he stated that the question had already been before the department, but the service was not granted; the reason being that only two or three Europeans and comparatively few Natives were interested. A fortnightly service would cost about £35 a year, while the revenue would not be more than £2 or £3. Raukokore was now served from Opotiki, and Hicks Bay from Gisborne, fortnightly. The distance between Raukokore and Hicks Bay was about thirty-five miles.

EQUITABLE INSURANCE COMPANY, DUNEDIN.

The Hon. Mr. KERR asked the Attorney-General, If the Government will bring in a short Bill this session empowering the Governor in Council to appoint examiners and auditors to investigate the books and audit the accounts of the Equitable Insurance Company, Dunedin, now in liquidation? The company to which his question referred was floated some ten years ago, and a large number of its shareholders were in his part of the colony. It was very successfully floated by a gentleman who came down, named Mr. Kirkcaldie. The company carried on successfully for some time, and received a large amount of business. It took risks, some of which were no doubt rather risky, while others were good; and it seemed to be so successful, at the outset, that it took upon itself to open its arms and embrace a number of other businesses. It took over the Australian Fire Insurance Company, the Hanseatic Company, the Hamburg-Magdeburg Company, and the Accident Indemnity Company. The terms of purchase, or anything connected with these businesses, never appeared in any balance-sheet, nor were they ever reported upon by the directors. Under the memorandum of association the company had no power to acquire these businesses without the consent of the shareholders. Shortly after this it was alleged that carelessness, recklessness, extravagance, and even illegal transactions had brought the company into difficulties. The shareholders residing out of Dunedin could get little or no information as to the true state of affairs. While money was available to pay all demands the directors drew their fees, and were quite satisfied to let the company drift along. In fact, the shareholders were very much pleased when the company was placed in liquidation, because

they then thought they could see an end to the trouble. They were mistaken, however. A gentleman was appointed by the directors who was to receive £1,000 to liquidate and wind the company up. After three years it was said that this liquidator had given up the job, and that another person had been appointed to carry it on.

The Hon. Mr. OLIVER rose to a point of order. He did not wish to interfere with the asking of a question, nor did he know anything of the affairs of this company; but he would submit that statements were being advanced in connection with individuals which, he thought, rather exceeded the latitude which was usually allowed in asking a question.

The Hon. Mr. KERR said, if he was not permitted to make the few remarks he intended to make, he presumed he would have to move the adjournment of the Council.

The Hon. Mr. SPEAKER understood that the honourable gentleman was simply making a few remarks to explain the question.

The Hon. Mr. KERR asked Mr. Speaker to notice that he had been very careful, in making his remarks, to say that these things were "alleged." He did not say positively that they had happened. His question led to this point: that he wished the Government to introduce a short Bill, so that they might be made acquainted with all the transactions of this company.

The Hon. Mr. OLIVER wished to explain that his only interest was in the maintenance of the usual order of the conduct of business in the Council. Statements were being made about the conduct of persons, and he did not know whether those persons whose conduct was being impugned were represented in the Council, or whether any member of the Council knew anything of their conduct; but it seemed to him very undesirable that the character of persons should be criticized under the form of asking a question, when no opportunity would be afforded of making counter-statements.

The Hon. the SPEAKER said that under Rule 49 it was laid down that in asking a question no argument or opinion should be used further than was necessary to explain the question.

The Hon. Mr. KERR had no wish to move the adjournment, but simply wanted to explain the question. However, if he were called to order—

The Hon. the SPEAKER was not calling the honourable gentleman to order, but simply wished to inform him what the rule was, so that he might adhere to it.

The Hon. Mr. KERR was of opinion that if the Government answered the question in the affirmative there would be some revelations in connection with this company. He was satisfied, from all he had learned, that a great many people, after the inquiry, would be astonished; and the shareholders would be well satisfied if the Government did investigate the affairs of the company. It had been said that the directors of this company were honest, straightforward business-men; but the same

could be said, at one time, about the directors of Sydney and Melbourne banks, the Loan and Mercantile too, and other financial institutions.

The Hon. the SPEAKER said references of this kind would scarcely come within the Standing Order.

The Hon. Mr. KERR said it was evident he could not say exactly what he wanted to say. He might be allowed to add that he was somewhat sceptical, after his experience, when he heard much talk about honest men. He thought they were rather scarce. Diogenes, in his time, travelled, lantern in hand, in search of an honest fellow; Burns ranked an honest man as the noblest work of God; and he (Mr. Kerr) was anxious to know if any of God's noblest works were on the directorate of the Equitable Insurance Company of New Zealand. He would now simply ask the question. He had with him a printed list of the shareholders of this company, to the number of five hundred, there being 145,964 shares; and he thought that even that number of people in New Zealand should have some consideration at the hands of the Government. In looking over the list it would be found that not only tradesmen but labouring men and women were among the sufferers, who, he thought, should have some claim to the protection of the Legislature. There were many of them who had been ruined already by the action of this society, and those who were still solvent ought to be in a position to know what they had to pay. No doubt the liquidation would go on so long as the directors could extract calls from the unfortunate shareholders. He would like very much to expatiate on this question, as he felt very strongly on the matter, as also did a great number of persons on the West Coast.

The Hon. Sir P. A. BUCKLEY said the Government were often accused of taking too much care of individuals. He did not think any Act of Parliament that could be passed by any Government could prevent people from taking shares in companies. His honourable friend had informed the Council that these directors had acted illegally, and contrary to their articles of association: He would inform his honourable friend that there was no Act necessary for the purpose of making an investigation, nor was there any Act necessary for the prosecution of these people if they had acted illegally. There was already a law for that purpose, and there was a remedy in the hands of the shareholders.

The Hon. Mr. SHRIMSKI would move the adjournment of the Council, because he thought his honourable friend who had introduced the subject had been unfortunately curtailed in the remarks he wished to make. He also regretted the reply his honourable friend the Attorney-General had given. They all knew it was in the power of the shareholders to bring to book, if possible, directors for illegal transactions; but the position was this: that the people had already suffered to a great extent; and he thought it was the duty of the Government,

when they found that the people had been to a certain extent defrauded, to protect the inhabitants, especially as it was in the power of the directors to continue this state of affairs.

The Hon. Sir P. A. BUCKLEY would promise the honourable gentleman that, in the event of any case being placed before the Government, they would assist in every way to bring to justice the people referred to.

The Hon. Mr. SHRIMSKI said what they wanted was that the Government would be good enough to allow their Auditor-General to make an investigation. It sometimes occurred that an unfortunate young fellow, who might be placed in a position of trust, neglected to account for a shilling, either accidentally or wilfully, and the result was that he was brought to justice because he had tried to embezzle his employer's money. In this case the poor unfortunate shareholders had for years been robbed of their money, and all they asked was that the Government should assist them to take some means to either bring these people to justice or exonerate them, as the case might be. It would act as a warning to any other company, and would be in the interests of the public, without costing the Government anything. As an instance of the way in which the directors managed the property of the shareholders, he (Mr. Shrimski) knew a gentleman who was applied to for an advance of money, and the directors agreed to pay 9 per cent. for the money advanced. He did not blame this gentleman for getting the 9 per cent., but he did blame the directors for getting the advance without consulting the shareholders, when the shareholders were continually being called upon to pay calls: there was no end to it. All that they asked was that they should get a little protection, without any expenditure of public money.

The Hon. Sir P. A. BUCKLEY said that was what he had promised.

The Hon. Mr. McLEAN might say, first of all, that he had nothing to do with this matter, and never had. He did not wonder at the shareholders being annoyed at the delay which had occurred over the liquidation of this company, but it had been a question between the shareholders and the directors. They had been fighting it out between them, and he did not know that he need come there and fight it out on the floor of the Council. With regard to the amount that was lent, he believed it was lent to save the shareholders from the calls which would otherwise have been made on them, and to tide over temporary difficulties. As to the interest of 9 per cent., as stated by his honourable friend—he (Mr. McLean) was very certain it was 8 per cent.—they must remember that that class of security carried with it a high rate of interest. He did not think a man should be blamed for having come to the rescue of a company. He could not see, himself, why, if the liquidation was lasting so long, the shareholders could not take the matter into their own hands. The fact was, the shareholders were disunited in this matter, and that was what caused the trouble. He had no in-

Hon. Mr. Kerr

terest in this matter, but he merely rose because his honourable friend, instead of asking a question, had introduced debatable matter. The honourable gentleman should have put a motion on the Order Paper asking the Government to take certain action, so that he could then have gone fully into the subject. He did not think his honourable friend knew as much about the subject as he (Mr. McLean) did, and that was not very much. It would be better, he thought, if they confined themselves somewhat, and did not bring up the grievances of companies on the floor of the Council.

The Hon. Mr. OLIVER was sorry that his honourable friend Mr. Kerr appeared to think, when he (Mr. Oliver) rose, that he wished to put any curb on any statement that might be necessary in order to prove a bad condition of things in any company. He knew absolutely nothing of this company. He did not know the directors, nor did he know any of the circumstances to which the honourable gentleman alluded. His protest was only made in the interests of the orderly conduct of the business of the Council, because, if it were permitted to make statements of a grave character under colour of asking a question,—under circumstances which did not permit of any answer being made,—they did not know what covert or open accusation might be made against anybody in the future.

The Hon. Mr. KERR had no reason to doubt that the Hon. Mr. Oliver was endeavouring to keep to the rules of the House when he called attention to his (Mr. Kerr's) remarks. Certainly, he might have put a motion on the Order Paper instead of a question, and could then have spoken on the subject. He might also have moved the adjournment of the House, and have spoken as widely as possible. However, he only wished to ask the question and proceed to a certain length with his remarks, so as to bring the affairs of this company, which he believed had been to a certain extent mismanaged, before the notice of the Government, with a view of inducing the Government to bring in a Bill appointing examiners and auditors to clear up the affairs of this company. It was quite evident to him, and it would be to all members of the Council, that to wind up such a company as the Equitable three years was far too much time to allow. More especially was the time too long when the gentleman first appointed liquidator had been allowed, at the end of three years, to stand aside for another person. He could not help supporting the efforts of the shareholders in their endeavour to get the affairs of the company laid open to the public light, in order to have it ascertained whether the directors were guilty of mismanagement or not. It would be a very simple matter for the Government to accede to the request, which honourable members must see was a reasonable one—where there was a question of misplaced confidence in a number of directors. The shares of the company were distributed amongst working-people chiefly, some being women. They had

put their hard-earned savings into this company, and it could scarcely be conceived that the Government would not come forward and afford some reasonable protection to the people who were still connected with the company. He did not wish to prolong the discussion, and he hoped the Attorney-General would give what assistance he could by bringing in a Bill which would have the desired effect of winding up this unsatisfactory company.

The Hon. Sir P. A. BUCKLEY regretted that his honourable friend had misunderstood the position of the Government in reference to the matter. The Government had no authority to interfere, as the Courts were open to all shareholders; but, if his honourable friend would bring before him such proof as would warrant the bringing of a prosecution against the directors, every possible facility would be afforded to the shareholders. The first time he had heard of the matter was when the motion appeared upon the Order Paper; but he was quite satisfied that as the law stood there was sufficient power given at present for the prosecution of these directors if they had done anything they ought not to have done. He could only repeat that, if the honourable gentleman would bring under the notice of the Government any case such as he had referred to, in which investigation was desired, every facility would be afforded to shareholders to bring to justice the people who had done them injustice.

The Hon. Mr. REYNOLDS was understood to say that the offer of the Colonial Secretary was a very fair one—namely, that if the shareholders would bring a definite charge against the directors the Government would then take up the question. He knew very little about the matter; he was not interested in the company in any shape or form, and therefore was talking quite independently. He confessed he had a good deal of sympathy with the shareholders, but he did not believe there had been anything like a desire to sacrifice their interests.

The Hon. Mr. KELLY said that the difficulty appeared to him to be that the shareholders lived in different parts of the colony, and perhaps were not able to afford the money personally that was necessary to have the matter investigated. It was the case that under such circumstances breaches of the law were allowed to pass unpunished. In Scotland, and, he thought, in England, there was a public officer who sometimes took up cases where the individuals concerned could not do so—that was, in cases of scandalous breaches of the law. In New Zealand there was not a functionary endowed with that power, but that power, he thought, rested with the Government. If not, it ought to be endowed with it, because sometimes it happened that no person took any action whatever, and so the culprit escaped. It would be difficult, where any scandalous breach of the law had been committed, for the shareholders of a company in liquidation, without money, to lay an information and to go into the costly procedure of investigating the matter in a Court of law. It was the proper function of

the Government to make inquiry and, if found necessary, to institute proceedings; and, if a special law were required to deal with the case, the Government should consider the question.

The Hon. Sir G. S. WHITMORE said that the Council had passed this session the second reading of the Companies' Accounts Audit Act, which would surely meet the case, and enable the shareholders of this company to obtain that information without which they seemed to be afraid to proceed. He understood from the Hon. Mr. Kerr that the directors of the company had taken some steps which they were not authorised by law to take. Under the Act he mentioned, the true position of the company could, no doubt, be satisfactorily ascertained. There was one limitation: if the shareholders asked for a Government audit they must pay the cost. The cost, however, would not be enormous, and the information required could be got satisfactorily in that way. He understood that one single shareholder could bring the matter up, if he liked, before the Supreme Court, if the directors had done wrong. It was a pity the honourable gentleman who asked the question should be restrained by the forms of the House from fully ventilating the matter, but there was no way of his doing so except by giving notice of motion, and he would like to suggest that he should proceed in that way. In the meantime, the answer of the Attorney-General, he hoped, would prove satisfactory.

The Hon. Mr. BONAR said the Companies' Accounts Audit Bill provided that a majority in number representing two-thirds in value of the shareholders of any limited-liability company might apply for a Government audit. That provision would practically meet the difficulty.

The Hon. Mr. SHRIMSKI said the Equitable was not a limited company.

The Hon. Mr. BONAR said that the same Act contained a similar provision in regard to any company registered "as aforesaid with unlimited liability." He most fully sympathized with all that had been said in connection with the company referred to. It had been the means of producing very great distress and loss to the people of the West Coast. He thought he was right in saying that the company had taken no less than £50,000 from the West Coast, and the winding-up of the company would entail additional expense. This expense was falling upon a very few shareholders, because the number of shareholders was being gradually cut down. While this was the case, the expenses were going on, and consequently the heavy burden of winding-up was falling upon the few. He sympathized with the Hon. Mr. Kerr in the matter, and he thought the Council should assist him to have the affairs of the company inquired into. He would suggest to the shareholders that they should take united action in order to obtain a Government audit. That would be the practical way of getting out of the difficulty.

The Hon. Mr. JENNINGS thought the Act referred to would be but a poor satisfaction to

Hon. Mr. Kelly

the shareholders of this company. There were many companies, especially gold-mining companies, where the shareholders, after paying calls made with peculiar regularity, were placed in the unfortunate position of having also to pay for the liquidation of such companies, and the payments had been extended to such an extent that people had regretted entering into such speculations. So far as the Equitable Company was concerned, he had heard that it was a very great trouble at the present time to many shareholders on the West Coast, and he believed most honourable members would sympathize with the Hon. Mr. Kerr's question. If the Government could assist the shareholders in bringing to book the directors for infringing the law, he thought it would be right for them to institute proceedings at once. But the Companies' Accounts Audit Act would be of no use to the shareholders, as it was not yet law.

Motion negatived.

CHEVIOT ESTATE.

The Hon. Mr. STEVENS asked the Government, How many of the total population of Cheviot—stated in the Crown Lands Report, page 7, as being 650, as against 83 in 1891—are either purchasers or Crown tenants, and not "unemployed engaged in roadworks," stated by the report to be included in the total population of 650? In the Crown Lands Report, in reference to the Cheviot Estate, in the statistics given by the department of that estate, and the disposal of the lands, the following passage occurred: "The population in 1891 was about eighty-three, and at the present time about six hundred and fifty, including the unemployed engaged on roadworks." It appeared to him that it was a fair question for public information how many of the six hundred and fifty were selectors under the different classes of tenure. As it at present stood, he did not think it afforded the public any information at all, because the road-parties might be working in another district since the return was made.

The Hon. Sir P. A. BUCKLEY had very great pleasure in supplying the honourable gentleman with the information; and no doubt the answer would be an agreeable surprise to him. The following was a statement of the population of Cheviot on the 28th June: Settlers, 171; settlers' children, 191; persons employed by settlers, 20; in business, 10; employed by those in business, 40; Government officials, 9; employed by Government officials, 20; co-operative labourers, 163; road-contractors, 5; employed by road-contractors, 20; total, 649. It might be interesting to specify the occupations of the eighty-three persons who were on Cheviot in 1891: Sheep-farmer, 1; farmers, 2; station-manager, 1; tutor, 1; mail-contractor, 1; Government officials, 2; servants and workmen, 47; wives and children, 28.

MUNICIPAL PETITIONS.

The Hon. Mr. STEVENS, in moving the motion standing in his name, said that the

24th section of "The Municipal Corporations Act, 1886," was the one which dealt with the creation of new boroughs, and by that section the provision for the signing and presentation of a petition was confined to resident householders, and did not include ratepayers unless they were also householders; and, inasmuch as the petition might be the means of creating a borough embracing an area of six square miles, it would appear to be a matter of considerable importance. One would naturally have supposed that those who were permanently interested—owners of property, or those having a lease, or some reasonable permanent tenure of holding—would have an opportunity of expressing an opinion on the face of the petition, if in favour of it; but they were not even permitted the opportunity of petitioning in favour of the creation of a new borough, whilst weekly tenants, if sufficient in number, might impose upon the inhabitants of a district a change that they in no way were desirous of seeing carried into effect. There was nothing to be said upon the point other than the remark he had made in explanation of the motion, excepting that there was evidently a slip in the Act. There was no definition in the interpretation clause of "householder," or "resident householder." Practically, it meant that any one who lived, say, in Wellington, and owned a farm in a country district, although he might pay the rates of the district upon his property, would be absolutely precluded from any voice whatever in the question of a borough being created in the district in which his farm was situated. It was a very undesirable state of things, and, in view of the known fact that the Government had in preparation a Municipal Corporations Bill, it was desirable to call attention to this point, which appeared to him to be of considerable importance. If the matter were not taken in hand and the Act amended, it might be the means of inflicting very considerable hardship upon a *bonâ fide* proprietor whose position was perfectly ascertained by the fact of his being already a ratepayer.

Motion made, and question proposed, "*That it be a recommendation to the Government to include in any Bill to amend the Municipal Corporations Act a provision by which no signatures other than those of ratepayers shall be admitted to any petition under section 24 of 'The Municipal Corporations Act, 1886.'*"—(Hon. Mr. STEVENS.)

The Hon. Mr. RIGG intended to oppose the motion. No doubt it was a very desirable one from the Hon. Mr. Stevens's point of view, and those who thought with him that property should have more consideration than men. He quite understood that persons holding those views must approve of a motion of the kind; but he held totally different views upon the subject, and in that respect he believed that he was in accord with the majority of the people of the colony, who were in favour of extending the local-government franchise. He was quite aware that it was a popular superstition that the ratepayer paid the rates; but,

as a matter of fact, the ratepayer paid the rates only to the same extent as an agent paid moneys to his principal. The rates were collected, in most cases, from the tenants; but he would say that in many instances the tenants collected, at any rate, a portion of the rates from those who resided with them as lodgers. That being the case, it was right that in all local-government elections or questions of that kind every one resident at the time in the district should have the right to vote on the question, or to put his name on any petition such as that referred to. In regard to the case cited by the Hon. Mr. Stevens of a man residing in the city, and having possession of a farm in the country, that was the old argument in favour of the absentee vote. It was the same argument that was urged at the present time in countries where the electoral districts were divided, and the elections for representatives in Parliament were held on different days. It was urged in favour of persons having a vote that they happened to hold a piece of property in the district. He thought they had got beyond such an idea in New Zealand, and he was surprised to find at this stage of their advancement any one asking them to take such a retrograde step as was proposed in the motion—namely, to substitute the ratepayers' signatures on a petition for the creation of a borough in preference to those of householders. On those grounds he should oppose the motion, and probably take a vote of the Council upon it.

The Hon. Mr. SHRIMSKI said it was his intention to support the motion. Only members of the community who paid rates, *et cetera*, should have the right to vote. It was rather too much to expect property-holders to pay and not to allow them the power asked for. Such rates were spent on public works, and those who paid no rates were thereby benefited, because they were generally employed on those works.

The Hon. Mr. BOWEN entirely agreed with the remarks of the Hon. Mr. Stevens. The fact was, there had been an oversight in drafting the Municipal Corporations Act, the word "householder" being introduced in the most extraordinary way. There was no analogy between the provision referred to and other parts of the Act. He thought that the mode in which provision was made for dividing a district was utterly wrong, as there was a premium held out to a small coterie in any corner of a district to apply for a total change in its constitution without honestly consulting the ratepayers or householders. There was no provision for even a public meeting, or for the people being made acquainted with what was going on, while a few persons quietly went about picking up signatures here and there all around the district. Many people signed anything they were asked to sign in order to get rid of the persons who asked them, and then they said they did not know what they were signing. A case had recently happened where a large number of people—about forty—after signing a petition, had signed a counter-petition, and sent it to the Government, with a statement that they had signed the first one under a mis-

apprehension. He asked the Council whether that was a reasonable way of dividing up a district. There was a provision at one time for dividing counties in that way, but the Legislature had changed that, and now, if they wanted a county divided, they had to show good cause; they had to give the publicity required for a local Bill, and get an Act passed by Parliament. In the case of municipalities it should be the same thing, and those who wanted to effect a change should be obliged to let all the world know what they were about, and more particularly the people of the district affected. The remedy suggested by his honourable friend Mr. Stevens would be a remedy for a time; but he thought they should go further and strike out the provision complained of from the Municipal Corporations Act altogether, and leave those who wished to divide a district to go to the Legislature for the power to do what they wanted.

The Hon. Mr. MACGREGOR thought if the motion were slightly amended it would probably secure the support of the greater number of the members of the Council, and he would suggest that it would be a fair and proper thing to extend the motion by saying that ratepayers as well as householders should be allowed to sign such petitions for incorporation. If the motion were amended in that way it would be a recommendation to the Government to include in any Bill amending the Municipal Corporations Act provision for the signatures of ratepayers as well as those of householders being admitted in any petition, and so on. Then no one could very well object. He was aware that there were many absurdities which were the result of the present state of the law with regard to municipalities, where such municipalities included a very large extent of agricultural country. He did not think that it would be proper to deprive all those who were merely householders of the right of having some voice in the local management of the district in which they resided, and as to the form in which local government should be carried on. If the motion were slightly amended as had been suggested he thought there would be no objection to it.

The Hon. Mr. STEVENS said that, with regard to the suggestion of the Hon. Mr. MacGregor, it did not appear to him at all fair or desirable in any way that tenants who had no more than a weekly tenancy, and who might leave the district a week after lending assistance in the constitution of the district, should have the privilege referred to. It seemed to him contrary to right and propriety, and he could not see his way to accept the amendment. If it were desired to give the right to tenants of more permanent duration, that would be a more reasonable amendment. The Hon. Mr. Rigg appeared to him to put forward the view that because any one had a piece of property he should have the privilege of paying rates but no right of voting at all. That seemed to be the outcome of the honourable gentleman's argument. A man who had the misfortune to take office, say, in a Radical Ministry,

Hon. Mr. Bowen

and go away for six months, might find when he got back that his district had been put into a borough. To put it mildly, that was a case which might occur. He hoped the honourable gentleman would take the views of others, and ponder over them, and take every opportunity of communicating his own views and receiving others in exchange, for the result would be beneficial to him. The honourable gentleman seemed to think that he had nothing to learn in this world; but in the meantime it seemed to him he might apply to the honourable gentleman the remark attributed to Mr. Littimer on his first view of David Copperfield. Mr. Littimer was so struck by the inexperience of the callow youth that he replied, "You are very young, sir." He would apply the same remark to his honourable friend.

The Council divided.

AYES, 25.

Acland	MacGregor	Reynolds
Baillie	McCullough	Richardson
Barnicoat	McLean	Shrimski
Bonar	Montgomery	Stevens
Bowen	Morris	Swanson
Buckley	Oliver	Wahawaha
Dignan	Pharazyn	Walker, L.
Grace	Pollen	Whitmore.
Kelly		

NOES, 3.

Feldwick Jenkinson Rigg.

Majority for, 22.

Motion agreed to.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION.

The Hon. Sir P. A. BUCKLEY said, before proceeding to the orders of the day he would like to call attention to something that had appeared in the *New Zealand Times* of Saturday, the 18th August, in reference to himself. He would not have alluded to the matter, but that some people outside were under the impression that he was opposing the Middle District University College Bill. The report stated that "The Hon. Sir P. A. Buckley, though objecting generally to university education, supported the Bill." He thought, if gentlemen had the privilege of appearing and reporting speakers in that Council, they ought to state facts. No one had supported the Bill more earnestly than he had. He regretted very much that he had been misreported in this matter, for no one had a greater regard for the cause of education than himself. That was not the first time he had been misreported, but he had refused to take notice of it. He was also misreported on the Divorce Bill. If gentlemen had the right and privilege of giving information to the public, they should give accurate information. His attention had also been called to the reporting of the debates, and he thought that, unless some improvement was made in this respect, so far as he was personally concerned he would rather not be reported at all. His attention had been called to the most outrageous misstatements and nonsense put into the mouths of speakers, which they had never ventured to utter. He had brought the

matter before the Council so that they might deal with it when the subject came up for consideration. It seemed to him that reporters were sent there to practise upon the Council, and when perfected were sent down to another place.

INDUSTRIAL CONCILIATION AND ARBITRATION BILL.

The Council proceeded to consider the following reasons of the House of Representatives for disagreeing with the amendments of the Council in this Bill:—

“The amendment in clause 7 prevents industrial unions from holding more than one acre of land. There is no reason why such bodies should not invest their accumulated funds in land, or lend them on mortgage with the right of entering into possession should the mortgagor fail in repayment.

“The amendment in clause 86, enacting, as it does, that members of Boards to be constituted under the Act shall be paid, has the appearance of an interference with the public revenue, and for that reason the Committee trusts the Legislative Council will not persevere with it. Moreover, it is not desirable that members of these Boards should be paid, as this would greatly increase the cost of settling industrial disputes. If, however, it were so desirable, the Chairman of the Boards should certainly not be the only members unpaid, as the amendment seems to contemplate.”

The Hon. Mr. MONTGOMERY, in referring to the first amendment, explained that when the clause was before the Council it was moved by the Hon. Mr. Jennings that the limit should be one acre. He understood at the time the honourable gentleman to say that the Minister who framed the Bill approved of that amendment, and as it was supported by several other honourable members he had not called for a division, thinking that the amendment was in accordance with the wishes of the Minister who framed the Bill. Had he known the Minister's opinions were different he would have found arguments in support of the clause and taken a division. He would now move, in respect of this clause, that the Council do not insist upon this amendment. With regard to the second of the two amendments, if the question turned upon agreeing or not agreeing with the amendments as a question of privilege, although he was sure this honourable House would not think of infringing the privileges of the other branch of the Legislature, yet if the question were raised he should feel as strongly as any member of this Chamber. But the other House did not state that the Council had invaded its privileges. Had it done so he would have said it was their duty to appoint Managers to investigate the matter, and take such action upon the report as the Council might think advisable. But he did not think that the other Chamber considered the Council had infringed their privileges: happily they had not done so; and the question, therefore, whether any infringement had taken place was not a matter for their con-

sideration. So, passing from that as not a matter which required to be considered when the question of agreeing or disagreeing with the other House on this Bill had to be dealt with, he came to the second part of the paragraph, and he thought it was not desirable that members of the Conciliation Board should be paid, as that would greatly increase the cost of settling industrial disputes. When that clause was proposed in the Council he had stated that he thought it was exceedingly important that the members of the Board should act in the same manner as Justices of the Peace—that they should give their time and attention for the good of the country, as the unpaid Magistrates did. He had known Justices of the Peace, day after day, to give that time and attention which it was their duty to give, as men who could afford the time, in the administration of justice to their fellow-countrymen. He objected to the clause very strongly before, and took a division upon it, but it was carried by fifteen to eleven, and so the Bill passed with the amendment which stated that members of Boards should be paid fees. The other House objected to that strongly, for the reasons given, and he had not changed his opinion. Members of the Council might differ then as they had differed before from him, and might take such measures as they thought necessary to retain the words. With regard to the amendments, he would take the first one, and move, *That the Council do not insist on this amendment.*

The Hon. Mr. BOWEN thought the Council should insist on the amendment. He did not understand the mover of the amendment to the clause in the Council in the same way as his honourable friend Mr. Montgomery seemed to have done—that the provision was put in because it was approved by the Hon. the Minister of Labour. However much an honourable member might have generally agreed with the Government which introduced a measure, it by no means followed that in moving an amendment he necessarily did so in deference to the supposed views of the Government. This was an extraordinary assumption. He might say that he had talked over this matter with gentlemen who held very varied views with regard to all sorts of questions in connection with unions and similar bodies, and he must say that the balance of opinion was that the accumulation of landed property would tend gradually to change the unions into guilds and exclusive bodies like clubs, which might require a fee from any poor man who wanted to join them. Further, it was considered that unions which raised more money from their contributories than was necessary for present objects were acting against public policy. It was on this ground that the limits referred to were proposed in regard to the funding of money by associations of that sort. With regard to the question of investment, he understood that one of the reasons for the amendment was that no union should invest its money on mortgage as companies did, and make a source of revenue from the proceeds. He thought there was a very great objection to this, for

he had heard it stated by members of unions that it was not advisable that large sums of money should be raised which were not wanted within a reasonable time for any purpose, and that the money raised should be held in the shape of liquid assets, which might be readily available when wanted. When he had asked how the Courts were to enforce their judgments under the Arbitration Act,—if they could be enforced at all against working-men as well as against those employing labour,—he had been told, “Oh! the unions will take care of that.” Now, how were unions to do that, if their funds were not available? If they put their money on mortgage they would find that they could not put their hands on it at any moment. He thought they ought, on every ground, to insist on the amendment they had made, and he proposed that they should disagree with the motion. He moved, *That the Council insist on its amendment in clause 7.*

The Hon. Sir G. S. WHITMORE was sorry to disagree with his honourable friend Mr. Bowen, but he could not help thinking that if the honourable gentleman had thought a little more on the subject he would have come to the conclusion that the various unions could manage their affairs perfectly well without any direction from the Council. He believed the honourable gentleman was carried away with the idea that the only object the unions had in collecting funds was to amass a certain sum in liquid assets to be used on the occasion of a strike. If that was the chief object of the unions in having their money ready, he thought, when their articles of association were submitted to the Government, ample provision could be made for that. He had no doubt that, in the interests of those who opposed strikes, it would be very much better for the unions to have their money on mortgage than in the bank as liquid assets. He could not see that the amendment was in the interests of the country at all. He would have voted, had he been present, against the provision, and he was sure the Minister of Labour was totally misunderstood as recommending the provision in the Bill. He could not help thinking that this was an amendment which they could very well afford to waive; and, for his part, he should vote against the amendment of the Hon. Mr. Bowen on that ground, and because he thought it was an interference with the unions, and he could not see that the general public could be at all interested in regard to the investment of the money.

The Hon. Mr. JENNINGS said the whole object of his amendment in the Bill had been misunderstood. He did not think that any conversations outside of the Chamber, such as mentioned by the Hon. Mr. Montgomery, should be referred to; but he would tell his honourable friend that there was no misunderstanding on his (Mr. Jennings's) part in the matter. A mistake had been made, but not by him: that could be borne out by another member of this Chamber, who was present when the conversation referred to took place. He (Mr. Jennings) took his ground on the amendment,

Hon. Mr. Bowen

not because he objected to the unions holding any property they liked, but on the stronger ground that it had been his experience, as he had stated in Committee, that the trustees of friendly societies often invested their funds badly. If the unions wished to invest their accumulated funds in landed property he had no objection; but he believed that, if a poll were taken of the members of any union as to investing their funds in land, many of them, being intelligent men and also members of friendly societies, would carefully weigh any such proposal—their past experience would make them refrain from such investments. The object he had in moving that amendment was certainly to protect them, and if by some fair compromise he could do so he should be only too happy. If Managers were appointed to set forth reasons, he would like some such reason as this to be included: That if the trustees recommended a sum of, say, £200 of the accumulated funds for investment in lands, the matter should be placed before the members of the union, and, if a majority of the members decided on the investment, the thing would, in his opinion, then be in good order. That, he thought, would be a safeguard to the members of unions that their funds would not be lost through bad investments by trustees, who were not always wise in their dealings with funds of unions or friendly societies. However, he did not want to set his little pop-gun against the Government in this matter—after all, it was a mere detail in the business. As the Hon. Sir George Whitmore had said, the unions would possibly know what was best to do in regard to it. In talking over the matter with the Hon. Mr. MacGregor, he had come to the conclusion that his interpretation of the clause would perhaps meet the whole case. Clause 7 stated that any industrial union may purchase or take on lease any house or building, and any land; and his honourable friend had said that on this a vote of the union should be taken. If that was so, he was perfectly satisfied, and would agree with the Hon. Mr. Montgomery's motion—that the Council does not insist on its amendment in clause 7.

The Hon. Dr. POLLEN was not in his place in Committee when the amendments which were objected to by the House of Representatives were made in the Bill. He therefore did not know the considerations upon which the amendments in clause 7 were based. He was not himself disposed to insist upon the retention of the amendment, for this reason: that he thought it would not be politic to discourage trade-unions from the possession of such property as they desired to obtain, or to object to their investing their funds in any way they might think best. There was nothing that so completely steadied an individual or a company on the brink of litigation as the feeling that there was something to be lost. With respect to the other amendment, he was disposed to insist on that being retained as it was. In making that amendment the Council acted within its constitutional right and in strict accordance with its own Standing Orders. Clause

86 gave the Governor power, but it did not oblige him to impose fees. In a great number of cases a certain amount of labour and trouble would necessarily be imposed upon the members of these Boards when they were elected, and there was no reason whatever why men called upon to discharge a public duty of that kind at their own personal loss of time and trouble should not receive some remuneration for what they did; nor was there any reason why His Excellency, having power under this Act to impose these fines on certain occasions, should not make such provision for fees and fines of Board and Court as would cover the necessary expenses of both. The objection that the amendment made touched upon general revenue was not tenable, and, if it did, the Council was perfectly within its rights in doing what it had done. It was quite right and proper that men who gave their time, and some of whom would be drawn from the labouring-classes, to whom time was money, should be paid for what they did. As to the assertion that these fees would increase the cost of procedure under the Board of Conciliation, they had more than once heard as a doctrine from the Ministerial benches on the subject of costs that it was desirable to make legal processes as expensive as possible, in order to discourage the disposition to litigation which was so common in these days. With regard to the provision which insisted on the payment of the Boards being retained, the objection that the Chairman's salary was not provided for was hypercritical, for when the Chairman was elected by the members of the Board he became as much a member of the Board as any of the members appointed by the Governor, and ought to be paid accordingly, if he had no objection to it. However, it was very easy to remove any misunderstanding in that direction.

The Hon. Mr. MACGREGOR thought it would be a great pity if the Council were to insist on their amendments to section 7. The matter was, after all, a comparatively trivial one. As his honourable friend had said, it was a matter that might be left for the decision of the unions themselves in each particular case, and he thought the amendment moved by the Hon. Mr. Jennings must have been moved under a misapprehension as to the meaning of the section. When moving the amendment, he seemed to be under the apprehension that the trustees under this section would have power to acquire land without any limit. If that were so, there might be very good reason, probably, for the amendment; but as the clause stood originally he was quite sure that was not its meaning. The clause stated that it was the union itself, and not the trustees, that was to be endowed with the power to acquire land. The reference to trustees was merely that the land was to be acquired in the names of the trustees. The trustees themselves would have no power at all to acquire the land. If the honourable member was prepared to accept this explanation of the meaning of the sections he thought it would remove his reasons for moving the amendment. He was quite

sure that the mover of the amendment and the members of the industrial unions generally would not be prepared to insist on this amendment, and he thought it would be a pity if they did so.

The Hon. Mr. PHARAZYN was inclined to agree with the reason given by the House of Representatives in regard to clause 7—namely, "That there is no reason why such bodies should not invest their accumulated funds in land, or lend them on mortgage, with the right of entering into possession should the mortgagor fail in repayment." That seemed a good reason enough; and it should really be left to the discretion of the trades-unions to invest their money as they pleased. He did not apprehend—even if these bodies became guilds, as the Hon. Mr. Bowen thought they might—that there would be any objection to that. They had known of great bodies owning a large amount of property which had become guilds, and which were to a certain extent a species of club, and no great harm seemed to have arisen from that. Many of those bodies had done useful work, and he thought, on the whole, the tendency would be to make them less inclined to fight than if their funds were in a liquid condition. The mere fact of their possessing funds not immediately available would induce them to pause before throwing all their means into a fighting fund. He thought on that account it would be rather a good thing to allow these bodies to have full power in the investment of their funds.

The Hon. Mr. JENKINSON would like to add a word of warning to what had already been said. It appeared to his mind, from the alacrity with which the honourable gentlemen who had formerly steadily opposed the Bill now came to the conclusion that these words were unnecessary, that there was some suspicion attached to it. And he would ask the honourable gentleman in charge of the Bill to keep his eye open, to see what might be behind this. He was surprised to find that honourable gentlemen who had opposed the Bill all through had suddenly realised that they could agree unreservedly with the action taken by the Government in another place. It struck him that there was something suspicious about it. Now, as regarded the investment of a union's funds in land, he thought the unions should have a certain amount of liquid assets to meet necessary expenses to which they might be put under this Act, and it might be as well if they kept their funds immediately available in case of need. He thought the Hon. Sir George Whitmore was perfectly right when he said these unions could take care of themselves. He thought they would not allow their funds to be tied up in land so that they could not make use of them when required, and therefore he considered that these words could with safety be struck out. He did not think it was necessary to say anything as to whether or not the Minister of Labour had suggested that these words should be put in. He would like to be convinced that what the Hon. Mr. MacGregor had stated was correct

—namely, that trustees of a union had not power to invest money in land without the express permission of the members of the union. He was very much afraid that the trustees had full power to do so, and they were liable to invest money in rather questionable investments. He would like to feel convinced that the Hon. Mr. MacGregor was right.

Amendment, That this Council do insist on its amendments in clause 7, negatived.

The Hon. Mr. BOWEN said, with regard to clause 86, he agreed with the honourable gentleman who proposed that the amendments should not be insisted upon, though not for the same reasons. He agreed with the honourable gentleman for this reason: He thought it was very important that, now there had been a question of privilege raised to a certain extent, they should state very clearly their views upon the subject. It was quite clear, by the Standing Orders of both Houses, that they were perfectly justified in amending any clause which dealt with the question of fees, so long as these fees were not revenue to be accounted for in the Treasury in the ordinary way. He had taken great trouble to get at what the question really was, but, unfortunately, in the drafting of this clause the word "fees" had been used in two different senses in different parts of the clause, and he thought this had misled a good many honourable members, as it had misled himself to a certain extent. In the first part of the clause the word "fees" was distinctly used for money to be paid to either one party or the other, as the Court might direct. In that case there was no doubt at all about it that they would be within their perfect right to amend that part of the clause. He thought, himself, that in the second part of the clause under consideration the word "fees" undoubtedly meant direct salary to be paid under the appropriating clause 87, which provided that all expenses of the Act were to be paid out of moneys appropriated by Parliament. In that case they would be going beyond their constitutional right in dealing with the matter, if his view was a correct one, and he thought it was. He thought the clause was awkwardly drafted, but he could not vote against the motion of the honourable gentleman in charge of the Bill.

The Hon. Mr. OLIVER agreed with what had been said by his honourable friend Mr. Bowen. He was misled—as it appeared a great many others had been—by the use of the word "fees" in two distinct senses. The proper drafting to give effect to what the Council desired would have been to insert in subsection (7) of clause 86, before the words "fees shall be paid," the words "portion of such," so that the words would then read, "and what portion of such fees shall be paid to the members," *et cetera*. That was the intention of the Council—namely, that the fees which should be paid to the members of the Board or Court should be paid out of the fees which they had power under the subsection to prescribe. He was convinced by the representation of his honourable friend opposite that it was desirable that

the fees should be paid to members of the Board of Arbitration as well as to the Court of Conciliation, but he did not think it was essential in any way. He agreed with the suggestion which was made by the Hon. Mr. Bowen, that they should not insist on these amendments.

The Hon. Sir G. S. WHITMORE would oppose this amendment; but, thinking as he did, he considered the action of the House of Representatives struck at the root of their privileges. He should be very much disposed on this account to support the matter now, even at the cost of retracting his former vote. It was a temptation. He did not think it was a matter of very great consequence, however, because he presumed the employers or the unions would themselves provide for the services of the members of the Board of Conciliation; and if it were necessary to lay down a certain sum he thought it would be very much better to leave it to those bodies, and therefore he had voted against it. This Bill said distinctly that the fees could be paid to the President or members of the Court. It appeared to him that, instead of inserting the words "or Board," as was done, it would have been better to put "paid by the unions respectively." He thought the action of the other Chamber struck at the root of the utility of the Council, and he would be very much disposed to resist it, and when they had some very clear case he would be disposed to take a stand in the matter. He was quite willing to waive his objection at this time, however, and agree with the other House against the amendment. His honourable friend Mr. Bowen had said there were two kinds of fees. In one sense there were, and in another there were not. He thought the context showed that the two kinds of fees were distinctly separate in this Bill. Although, perhaps, if they were supposed to be technically the same, the Council had exceeded its functions, he would have been disposed to have taken a stand even on this occasion, because he was sure the Council was in danger of losing a great many of its privileges.

The Hon. Mr. KELLY thought that the Council, in giving fees or payments to the Board, were certainly exceeding their constitutional power, because it was laid down in the Constitution Act that no money should be appropriated by this branch of the Legislature. Their powers and privileges were just the same as the powers and privileges of the House of Lords in England, or as they were on the 1st January, 1865. If honourable members looked at May, page 642, it would be seen that the House of Lords could not make any amendments that would alter the intention of the Commons with regard to the amount of any rate or charge, whether by increase or reduction. But in this Bill they had increased the rate: in fact, they had dealt with these Boards in just the same manner as if they were dealing with Land Boards, by giving them fees for attendance. He thought, in the case of a Land Board, if the

Hon. Mr. Jenkinson

fees had not been inserted by the House, the Council would not have considered they had power to grant fees to members of the Board: it was just a parallel case. He thought in this case they had exceeded their powers, and therefore should not insist on their amendments.

The Hon. Mr. JENKINSON thought, if this question of privilege had been placed before the Council as a reason for not insisting on the amendment, they would have known what to do, but he did not think it was the only reason. The honourable gentleman in charge of the Bill interfered with this particular clause before he (Mr. Jenkinson) brought in his amendment. The honourable gentleman struck out the word "President," and, if that did not interfere with the privilege of the other House, the words "or Board" could not interfere with it. The honourable gentleman went on to tell them that members of the Board should not be paid because Justices of the Peace were not paid. When he proposed this amendment he stated that the reason why this Board should be paid was that members of the Court were paid. If it was just that one should be paid, then both should be. And it was unreasonable to ask men to sit on any Board day after day, and be dependent on the liberality of the unions that elected them. He admitted that Justices of the Peace who sat on the bench were not paid; but Justices of the Peace did not sit for two months at a time, as members of this Board were likely to be called upon to do; and, if they were to ask a working-man to sit for two months, and not receive any remuneration except at the whims and fancies of the party concerned, he thought it was a wrong position to put a man in. Therefore he thought his amendment was a reasonable one for the House to accept. One of the reasons stated on the Order Paper was that "the Chairman of the Board should certainly not be the only one of the members unpaid," as the amendment seemed to contemplate. The omission of the Chairman simply arose from the fact that the Hon. Mr. Montgomery, without notice, interfered with the clause as regarded the President or Chairman of the Court before he (Mr. Jenkinson) suggested his amendment. He was of the same opinion as he was when he proposed the amendment, and he thought the Government would eventually have to provide payment for the members of those Boards as they had done for members of the Court. Entirely on the ground of the question of privilege he would not insist on his amendment.

The Hon. Mr. SHRIMSKI was much pleased to hear the expressions of opinion which had fallen from honourable members with regard to this last clause. He had called the attention of the Acting Speaker to the effect of the clause in discussing the Bill before. He had asked him if it was a money clause. The Acting Speaker ruled it was not; but he (Mr. Shrimski) pointed out that it was an appropriation, and divided the Council upon it. He did not wish in any way to fall out with the other branch

of the Legislature, but he was glad that his judgment had proved to be right.

The Hon. Mr. PHARAZYN said his honourable friend was quite justified in enjoying his little triumph. It seemed to him that the whole question was a matter of justice—that these persons, who might have to sit not merely for a day or two, but possibly for some months, on these Boards should be paid for their services. However, they were in this position: that they could not do an act of justice themselves; and he was only surprised that the Government, who had it in their hands, had not looked at the matter from this point of view. He voted with his honourable friend on a former occasion, and he should be glad to do so now if the question of privilege had not been involved.

The Hon. Mr. KERR scarcely thought the Board would be required to sit two months in the discharge of its duties. He would feel sorry if it had to sit so long without being paid, but the fact of there being no pay would cause the members of the Board to expedite the business. Should it be found, however, after one or two cases had come before the Board, that extended time was necessary, the Act could be amended next session to provide for it. So far as he could see from the arguments adduced, they had overstepped the boundary and their powers by altering the clause referred to; and, having discovered that, they should retire gracefully from the position.

Motion, *That the Council do not insist on its amendment in clause 86*, agreed to.

HARBOURS BILL.

The Hon. Sir P. A. BUCKLEY, in moving, *That this Bill be now read the second time*, said that when it was introduced in another place it was a simple measure and of small dimensions, but in its passage through the House amendments had been suggested by Harbour Boards all over the colony, and many of them had now been embodied in the Bill. As honourable members were aware, the object of the Bill was to enable Harbour Boards to pay their overdrafts on the previous year's revenue out of the incoming year's revenue. That was the original intention of the measure, but, as already explained, in its passage through another place other provisions had been inserted. He would like to call attention to clause 3, which gave Harbour Boards power to create a sinking fund for the purposes mentioned in that clause. At present they had not that power, and it was put in the Bill at the suggestion of a Harbour Board in the South. Then, permission was given to Harbour Boards to levy rates on merchandise in order to make up for any loss in their revenue. It was considered desirable to have a give-and-take scale, so that certain goods might be charged more, and others less, according to their value. Clause 5 provided for exemptions. Clause 88 of the present Act was as follows:—

"Any colonial trading vessel the master or mate of which holds a pilotage-exemption certificate shall, unless the master employs a

pilot, pay annually, on first entering the port, one full rate of pilotage in and out of the port in respect of which such certificate is issued and that such vessel may visit, which shall exempt such vessel from liability for pilotage rates for one year from the date of such annual payment."

This was amended by clause 5 of the present Bill to meet cases of this kind: A vessel came into the harbour in March, and the exemption certificate was given for one year only. She did not enter the harbour again until June, and as the law stood at present the certificate would date from June, but under the clause in this Bill the exemption certificate would issue from the date on which the inward pilotage was paid. With regard to clause 6, the Harbour Board was not made liable for any act of the harbourmaster, provided he was a duly-qualified pilot. Clause 7 gave power to subdivide the rating districts. He did not know that the other provisions required any explanation, as, with the exception of the two clauses, the Bill was simply a machinery one.

The Hon. Mr. STEVENS said it might be taken for granted that certain portions of the Bill would be found very useful, but here were a number of things which had been introduced in a form which did not meet his approval, and he did not think the Government knew what the result of them was likely to be. He referred particularly to the 2nd clause, where there was the power of overdraft on the part of Harbour Boards generally. Probably it would be considered that the power of overdraft should be given to them as to other local bodies; but it seemed to him it was a proper subject for inquiry whether these powers should be given unless accompanied by safeguards similar to those which were provided in similar cases in respect to other local bodies. If honourable members referred to the Municipal Corporations Act, and also to the Counties Act, they would see that the power with regard to overdrafts was defined in almost exactly the same terms, but in this Bill there was a total absence of safeguards. He considered there should be some responsibility on some one in the case of misused power; but the special provision in the two Acts he had mentioned was entirely omitted from the Bill. Clause 201 of "The Municipal Corporations Act, 1886," provided the following limitation:—

"It shall not be lawful for the Council to borrow moneys as in this section mentioned, or to enter into any engagements or contracts whereby the total liabilities of the Council (exclusive of all loans lawfully raised and debentures lawfully issued) shall, at the end of the month of March in any year, exceed the ordinary income of the Council for such year."

That was the safeguard provided in order to prevent this power of overdraft from being misused by a local body. In very many cases under this Bill it was quite clear that on the 1st April, the commencement of the financial year, the Harbour Board might overdraw to the full amount provided by the Bill—that was, to the amount of their general revenue

of the previous year. There was nothing to prevent their expending the whole of the income for that year and leaving the overdraft uncovered at the end of the year. He was afraid in that case the amount of the overdraft would probably become permanent if the safeguard which was put in the Counties Act and in the Municipal Corporations Act were omitted from the Bill. He sincerely trusted the Council would address itself to this question, as there was a power in the Bill for a Harbour Board to borrow the whole of its income from the 1st April, or, rather, to borrow the whole of the amount represented by the general revenue of the Board. What was the object for which this power of overdrawing was given to local bodies? Surely it was to enable them to be put in a position in which by reasonable anticipation their finances should not be embarrassed, and that they should be able to carry on their operations without any inconvenience during that year. There was another objection he had to the Bill. They had here for the first time an entire exoneration of the bank which might conduct the account of a Harbour Board. It was provided in clause 2 that the bank need not be concerned as to whether the limit was being or had been exceeded. One of the protections that the ratepayers and the general public had against extravagant overdrafts, and against the misuse and extravagance of local bodies, was not in the audit that took place, and not from the fact that each member of the local body might be called to account, and might have to pay £100 by way of penalty: the strongest protection that they could have lay in the fact that there was a law limiting the advances, and that the bank making the advances knew that if they exceeded the amount authorised by law they would not have any legal power to recover. He thought it right to call attention to these two points, as they were of such consequence that he really dreaded the possibility of the clauses remaining in the Bill in their present shape after the Council had done with it; and it was entirely with that object that he ventured to offer a few remarks upon the second reading.

The Hon. Mr. OLIVER desired to remark that, in addition to the objection mentioned by the Hon. Mr. Stevens, there seemed to him in clause 4 a most objectionable extension of the power of charging harbour rates given to Harbour Boards. Most Harbour Boards were at present limited as to the rates that should be charged, and if they passed the clause as it appeared in the Bill it seemed to him that the Harbour Boards would have no limit whatever. When the Legislature passed the Harbour Board Acts it was thought necessary that some limitation should be placed on the rates charged by these Boards; and the result of so limiting them must necessarily be to force them to well consider their expenditure before that expenditure was authorised. But, if this limitation were removed, what guarantee had they that any kind of prudence, wisdom, or foresight would be used by these Boards in

Hon. Sir P. A. Buckley

the expenditure of money which was not their own? In view of that departure, the Bill required to be scrutinised very strictly before the Council should consent to pass it.

Bill read the second time.

The Council adjourned at ten minutes to five o'clock p.m.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.

Tuesday, 21st August, 1894.

Bill discharged—Fairburn School—Standing Orders—Taranaki Cool-storage—Aotea Harbour—Dairy Factories and Creameries—Tuakau—Onewhoro Punt—Waitaki North Railway-station—Import Duties—"Gallant Tip"—Lease—Midland Railway—Oyster-culture and Fish-curing—Female-refuge Work—J. O'Halloran—Police Officers' Railway-passes—Consolidated Loan, 1897—Waimate Post-office—Samoa—New Zealand Loan, 1896—Wangamoa Accommodation-house—Tariff Treaty with Australia—Bank of New Zealand—A. G. Henge—Borough Boundaries—Photographs of "Prohibited" Persons—Friendly Societies' Cheques—New Plymouth Harbour—McArthur-Forrest Cyanide Gold-extraction Process—Inglewood Stipendiary Magistrate's Court—Night-watchmen and Messengers—Alcoholic Liquors Sale Control Bill—Adjournment—Land for Settlements Bill.

Mr. SPEAKER took the chair at half-past two o'clock.

PRAYERS.

BILL DISCHARGED.

Licensing Bill.

FAIRBURN SCHOOL.

On the motion of Mr. HOUSTON, it was ordered, That there be laid before this House a return—(1) showing the cost of the case *Wrigley v. Fisher*, lately tried in the Supreme Court at Auckland; (2) also all correspondence between the Board of Education at Auckland and the Fairburn School Committee in connection with the teachers: such return to include all letters from any person other than the Committee on the same subject.

STANDING ORDERS.

Major STEWARD asked the Premier, Whether his attention has been called to the fact that Standing Orders Nos. 386 and 393 (relating to local Bills), and Nos. 366, 373, 374, 375, 378, and 380 (which omit the words "on vellum"), require the concurrence of the Legislative Council; and if he will take the usual course for obtaining such concurrence? He desired to point out to the Premier that in connection with the new Standing Orders, which were passed somewhat at his instance, it happened that Standing Order Nos. 386 and 393, which related to local Bills, had effected a change which would require the concurrence of the Legislative Council. For example, Standing Order No. 386 provided that, if there was more than one Magistrate's Courthouse situated within the district in which a local Bill was to have operation, then the

Bill was to be deposited at the Magistrate's Courthouse which was nearest the centre of the district. That was an amendment of the old Standing Order. The next Standing Order to which he had referred, No. 393, altered somewhat the requirement of the old Standing Order. That Standing Order, passed some years ago, provided that, if two sessions were held in the one year, then the notice given of a Bill for the first session should be effectual for the second session. The new Standing Orders enlarged this somewhat, and enabled notices and deposits in regard to local Bills to be effectual for any second session—not necessarily in the same year—provided a short notice was given, by advertisement, of the intention to reintroduce the Bill. Then, the honourable member for Patea had pointed out that there was an old form in the Standing Orders which he thought the House had departed from. That old form required that the Bills printed at the end of the session for presentation to the Governor should be printed on vellum. It was a matter of fact that no Bill had been printed on vellum for some years past: that was prepared calfskin, and they had merely been printed on sheepskin—that was to say, parchment. The House carried an amendment which Mr. George Hutchison moved, and which made an alteration with regard to this matter; but, as the Standing Orders of the Legislative Council retained the words "on vellum," it was necessary their consent should be obtained.

Mr. SEDDON said, with regard to the honourable member's remarks as to taking up Bills in a second session that had not passed through all their stages in a previous session, he did not think, himself, that would be a wise course in case a new Parliament had been elected. Then, as regarded the Standing Order with reference to the printing on vellum of the Bills that were passed, he believed that for some years past they had simply been printing them on sheepskin. He believed that a good strong paper was now made which was quite as serviceable in every way as sheepskin, upon which they could be printed; and, as the Standing Orders in this respect differed from those of the Council, they proposed to ask the Council to agree to amend their Standing Orders so as to bring the Standing Orders of both Houses into agreement on this matter.

Major STEWARD said there was a curious misunderstanding of the first part of the question on the part of the Premier. He (Major Steward) had said nothing about the taking-up of lapsed Bills at all. He had merely pointed out that in one matter relating to local Bills the Standing Orders of this House had been altered, and that this alteration required the concurrence of the Legislative Council.

Mr. SEDDON did not think that local Bills were at all affected by this alteration. After passing the House they would go up to, and in the ordinary way be dealt with by, the Council. It might be suggested to the Council that the House had altered its Standing Orders, so that it might take steps to so alter its Standing

Orders as to bring those of the two Chambers into agreement.

TARANAKI COOL-STORAGE.

Mr. E. M. SMITH asked the Minister of Agriculture, if he will include the Taranaki District in those districts where they will establish cool-storage, seeing that Taranaki is the chief dairy district in New Zealand; and, by so doing, keep the promise held out to a meeting of dairy farmers held in New Plymouth by the Government Dairy Expert, Mr. Valentine? This was a very important question to his district. The reason he had for asking it was this: He found out that the Government intended to erect in Auckland, Lyttelton, Wellington, and Dunedin cool-storage, and to have a dairy expert to grade the butter intended for shipment. Now, as Taranaki produced more butter than all the other provinces put together, he thought it was not right to leave it out. He had therefore put himself in communication with the people representing that industry in his district, and some of them came down and interviewed the Government on the subject. The Minister of Agriculture was not present, but the deputation got a very satisfactory reply. The contention of the Colonial Treasurer—but he was doubtful if the honourable gentleman's statement to the deputation on the clauses in the Dairy Bill indicated what he (Mr. Smith) thought was the intention of the department—was that all butter in New Zealand should be shipped from the four centres, Auckland, Wellington, Lyttelton, and Dunedin. Since the Colonial Treasurer stated to the deputation that butter could be shipped from any port, only the exporters would not get the advantages of cool-storage and grading as he thought, he (Mr. Smith) applied to Mr. Ritchie, the chief of the Dairy Department, for a copy of the Bill. If the Bill as drafted was carried, butter could only be shipped from the four centres, as already stated. If this was the case, it would be ruinous to Taranaki and the dairy industry, as Taranaki was the chief dairying district. He wanted to get at the facts of the case, and, as the Minister was now in the House, he would like to get an official reply from him.

Mr. J. McKENZIE said the question was entirely one of money, and the Government had at the present time the whole subject under consideration; but the honourable gentleman was wrong in saying that the Government had already decided it. In the first place, the Government required to get the Dairy Industry Bill through the House to give them the power which the honourable gentleman referred to; and, if the House agreed to that Bill, and it became law, it would then be for the Government to consider which of the various ports would require to be provided with cool-storage. That would be the time for the honourable gentleman to ask his question.

AOTEA HARBOUR.

3.0. Mr. LANG to ask the Minister of Marine, Whether, with a view of rendering the Aotea Harbour safe for navigation,
Mr. Seddon

he will cause the necessary beacons and buoys to be placed there? The settlers suffered great hardship in consequence of the harbour not being in a fit state for navigation. He had ascertained that the cost that would be necessary to fix the buoys and beacons would not exceed £10 or £12; and, as the amount required was so small, he hoped the Minister would see his way to grant the request of these hardworking settlers.

Mr. WARD was now making inquiries, and, if the shipping was found to be sufficient, buoys would be placed by the "Hinemoa."

DAIRY FACTORIES AND CREAMERIES.

Major STEWARD asked the Minister of Agriculture, if, referring to the reply given by him on the 14th August to the question of the honourable member for Patea, provision will be made under the New Zealand Government Agency for Advances Bill for the granting of advances upon sites, buildings, and plant of dairy factories and creameries; and, if so, to what proportion of the valuation thereof? The matter was one which interested his district particularly, and, as there was before the House a Bill enabling the Government to advance money to settlers at a reasonable rate of interest, it appeared to him that the Government might well assist the dairy factories by advancing on the security of their plant and premises at that rate of interest up to a fair margin. He would be content to accept half the value. If this were done it would enable these factories to be started in many districts where otherwise they could not be established. He knew that the sympathy of the honourable gentleman was with the matter, and hoped to have an affirmative answer.

Mr. J. McKENZIE acknowledged that the matter was one of considerable importance, and might say that legislation was now being prepared on the subject.

TUAKAU—ONEWHERE PUNT.

Mr. LANG asked the Government, If they will cause a sufficient sum to be placed on the estimates for a new punt on the Waikato River connecting the Tuakau district and the Onewhero Special Settlement, the present punt being unsafe and quite unfit for use? This was the only punt on the river between the Waikato Heads and Churchill, a distance of about forty miles; and the district served by this punt contained a great deal of Crown land. At this point the river was very wide and swift, and it was absolutely necessary that a safe punt should be placed there, to prevent accidents, and so that the settlers should not be cut off from their only outlet.

Mr. J. McKENZIE said this punt was under the control of the Raglan County Council in 1890, and it seemed to be the duty of that Council to provide for a new punt if the present one was unfit for use. He had no further information on the subject, but if the honourable gentleman would bring such further information on the matter before him he would make further inquiries.

Mr. LANG said he understood there had been some indirect promise made to make a bridge there, and the funds at the disposal of the county were too small for the providing of a new punt.

WAITAKI NORTH RAILWAY-STATION.

Major STEWARD asked the Premier, If, as promised on Tuesday last, he has made inquiry of the Railway Commissioners whether they will make provision for the fencing-in of the railway-station yard at Waitaki North; and, if so, what is the reply of the Commissioners? He had every reason to expect a negative reply to the question. If so, it would be an additional reason why he should vote on the earliest possible occasion for an alteration in the administration of the railways.

Mr. SEDDON said the Commissioners replied that they regretted they could not see their way to make provision for fencing the Waitaki North station-yards, the funds at their disposal being required for other more necessary and urgent works.

Major STEWARD.—Just so.

IMPORT DUTIES.

Mr. W. HUTCHISON asked the Colonial Treasurer, If he can see his way this session to bring in a Bill to carry into effect the recommendation contained in a minute of the Tariff and Industries Committee, laid upon the table of the House on the 14th August, to the effect that, until there is a reciprocal tariff agreed upon between the Australasian Colonies or any number of them, Customs duties on imports into this colony, similar to those levied severally by the other colonies, shall be imposed? The minute referred to had been already read in the House, but, as he had the impression that it was but very imperfectly heard, he thought its importance would justify him in again reading it. The minute was as follows:—

"In connection with a document (copy hereto annexed) signed by 1,152 farmers in Southland, asking for the imposition of a duty on live-stock imported from the Colony of Victoria in consequence of that colony having placed a duty of 50s. each on horses, this Committee is of opinion that the time has arrived when, at the earliest possible opportunity, a representative intercolonial conference should be held to discuss the question of introducing intercolonial reciprocity or free-trade, a reform which this Committee considers highly desirable in the interests of the whole of Australasia. In the meantime, and until such reciprocity or free-trade is obtained, the Committee recommends that a Customs tariff, equal to that levied by the other Australian Colonies, be at once imposed upon horses, cattle, sheep, and goods imported to New Zealand from those colonies. And the Committee request the Chairman to bring the matter before the House of Representatives."

He would be glad, and he was sure that the House and the country would be glad, if the

Treasurer could give him a favourable answer to his question.

Mr. WARD said the Government recognised fully the force of the representations made by the honourable gentleman, and the purport of the question he put. The difficulty in the way of doing what was suggested was that the Imperial law made it prohibitory for a differential imposition to be levied against one set of countries unless it had a general application, so that if the Government desired to pass a resolution that duties should be assimilated to those the other colonies charged against our imports, the levying of them would, unless they applied to the whole world, be prohibited by the Imperial law. The matter was one of very considerable importance, and the Government had the matter under notice, because settlers and others in the country were being subjected to very unfair competition as the result of the existing tariff, and the Government were hoping that something would be done this session in order to effectually prevent the injustice under which the colony was labouring. The Government were of opinion that a conference should be held in this colony or in the adjoining colonies for the consideration of a reciprocal tariff treaty; but until such a treaty was brought about it would not be to the interest of the settlers, producers, and artisans in this colony that they should allow to be brought to our shores goods and articles and produce at a very much lower rate than other colonies would allow us to send them to their shores. The matter was of such importance to the country that he believed it should be dealt with in a thorough and practical way this session if possible.

"GALLANT TIP" LEASE.

Mr. LARNACH asked the Minister of Mines,—(1) When the "Gallant Tip" lease, in the Lake Wakatipu district, was cancelled; (2) under what Minister's authority it was cancelled; and (3) what were the reasons that determined the Minister to cancel the said lease?

Mr. CADMAN said the answer to the first part of the question was that the lease was cancelled on the 22nd October, 1887; and notice of cancellation was published in the *Gazette* of that year, and would be found on page 1377. With regard to the second part of the question, it was on the authority of the Minister of Mines for the time being, the Hon. G. F. Richardson. In reply to the third part, the reason given was that the ground had not been worked for two years, and application had been made for it by others.

Mr. MITCHELSON asked the Minister of Mines if he would lay the papers relating to the case mentioned in the question upon the table of the House; as it would then be found that the honourable gentleman who asked the question, when Minister of Mines, was solely responsible for the cancellation of the lease named, and that the Hon. Mr. Richardson, a few days after taking office, gave effect to his

predecessor's (Mr. Larnach's) intention as expressed upon the papers.

Mr. LARNACH said the honourable gentleman was quite mistaken.

MIDLAND RAILWAY.

Mr. R. MCKENZIE asked the Minister for Public Works,—(1.) When will he make an official statement to this House as to the present position of the Midland Railway contract? (2.) Why is work on that contract allowed to be suspended? (3.) Will the Government enforce any penalties provided by the contract for suspension or non-completion of works within the contract time; and, if not, why not? He would point out that Parliament was now in the ninth week of the session, and that the question was one of vital importance to the Middle Island.

Mr. SEDDON said that, in consequence of a number of honourable gentlemen refusing to go to bed on the previous night at a reasonable hour, the Committee dealing with the matter had been unable to meet that day; otherwise it was anticipated that their report would have been submitted, and that the House would have been in a position to deal with the matter. It was the desire of the Government to get the question dealt with definitely this session.

OYSTER-CULTURE AND FISH-CURING.

Mr. MILLS asked the Premier, If he will give instructions to have a few hundred pamphlets printed, and disseminated through the post-offices, giving all the latest information relative to oyster-culture and fish-curing? This would be a simple method of disseminating the information.

Mr. SEDDON said the question was a most interesting one, and one of great moment. The cost, he understood, would not be great, and the information disseminated throughout the colony would not do any harm, and the answer was therefore in the affirmative.

FEMALE-REFUGE WORK.

Mr. G. W. RUSSELL asked the Government, Whether they intend to ask the House to vote this session any sum for female-refuge work in which the Salvation Army and other bodies may participate; also, why the vote for maintenance of children in schools—called St. Mary's, Ponsonby; St. Joseph's, Wellington; and St. Mary's, Nelson—are on the estimates increased from £2,700 to £3,200? He asked the question because there was no sum on the estimates for refuge work, and, as he was aware that a great deal of good was accomplished during the last few years by various institutions, he sincerely hoped the Government would make arrangements for putting a sum of money on the estimates. With regard to the second part of the question, there was on the estimates an increase from £2,700 to £3,200, and this was, no doubt, capable of explanation.

Mr. REEVES said, as regarded the first part of the question, the Government had not yet

Mr. Mitchelson

fully decided on the matter. They would take it into consideration. He quite agreed with the honourable gentleman that a great deal of good work had been done by those institutions. As to the second part of the question, it was quite true that the estimates showed the increase referred to as compared with those of last year, but the estimates for this year were only £300 ahead of the actual expenditure of last year. The expenditure last year moreover had only exceeded the estimate of that year by £200, and, as they did not desire to overdraw again, they had thought it better to ask for an increased amount this year. He hoped they would keep well within the estimate. The £500 was asked for because of the increase in the number of children. He was informed that something like sixty fresh children were committed last year to these schools by the Magistrates, and, though, of course, a number had been discharged, still it left an increase.

J. O'HALLORAN.

Mr. DUTHIE asked the Minister of Justice, Will he explain whether he is aware that, while on Thursday last he strongly upheld the sentence of seven days' imprisonment on John O'Halloran as fully deserved, yet at the time the sentence had been remitted, and that O'Halloran was then at large and within the precincts of this building? After asking the question on the day referred to, he met O'Halloran in the lobby, and was astonished to find that he had been discharged.

Mr. CADMAN thought, on behalf of the humane portion of the community, he ought to thank the honourable gentleman for keeping this matter so prominently before the public, because it would probably do good in the end. He desired, however, to say, in reply to the question, that the sentence was not remitted. O'Halloran was sentenced on the 10th and was let out on the 16th.

POLICE OFFICERS' RAILWAY-PASSES.

Mr. G. W. RUSSELL asked the Government, Whether they will recommend the Railway Commissioners to grant free passes, or fares at greatly reduced rates, to police officers when on holiday leave? Many members of the Police Force regarded it as a great hardship that, although they only received their leave at a season when the public had no holidays, they enjoyed no concessions from the Railway Department.

Mr. SEDDON said the reply of the Railway Commissioners was that they were not prepared to grant free passes or reduced fares as asked by the honourable gentleman. He quite concurred with the Commissioners. Those who were receiving salaries from the State were in constant occupation, and occasionally they wanted a pleasure-trip; but to say that they should have a privilege which was not granted to other colonists was, to his mind, unreasonable, and he did not think the Commissioners should grant it.

Mr. G. W. RUSSELL asked if the honourable gentlemen was not aware that the police

were liable to be called upon for duty wherever they might be.

Mr. SEDDON said, Yes; but if a policeman was travelling in plain clothes, and was not known, he did not know how he could be called upon to do duty.

CONSOLIDATED LOAN, 1867.

Mr. DUTHIE asked the Government, In view of the change that has been effected in regard to the 1867 Consolidated Loan, what steps, if any, are being taken to push on with the conversion into 3½-per-cent. stock of that part of the loan still outstanding in the hands of the public, as recommended by the Agent-General on the 30th May, 1892, and authorised by Mr. Ballance on the 8th August, 1892?

Mr. WARD said the conversions of this loan were being pushed on. The latest advices were to the effect that £288,900 of debentures had been converted, and offers were to be kept open, and, as the annual drawings would rapidly exhaust the amount outstanding, he had no doubt the amount would be subscribed.

WAIMATE POST-OFFICE.

Major STEWARD asked the Postmaster-General, Whether, with a view to the preservation of the public property, he will make provision in the estimates of his department for the painting with hematite of the roofs of the old and new post-office buildings at Waimate, at a cost not exceeding £20, such work having been recommended over a year ago? He said the department possessed a considerable area of land at Waimate, and at his instance had erected a new post-office, and he believed they were receiving some 6 per cent. on their outlay by way of rent of the old post-office building, which had been leased to a tenant. He thought therefore that it was fair to ask that the trifling sum he had stated should be devoted to the work mentioned in his question, and urged that it was in the interest of the public that the amount referred to should be spent.

Mr. WARD said the Government were making inquiries, and, if the position was such as the honourable gentleman represented, the work would be done.

SAMOA.

Dr. NEWMAN asked the Premier,—(1.) When the House is to have further information about the federation of Samoa and New Zealand? (2.) If the Government propose this session to introduce legislation dealing with this subject?

Mr. SEDDON did not know what further information the honourable gentleman desired. The Government made a statement as to what they proposed to do in the Speech from the Throne. There was no necessity for legislation. So far, the treaty Powers did not see their way to accept the offer of New Zealand, for which he was very sorry. He hoped that later on they would have some more favourable information.

NEW ZEALAND LOAN, 1856.

Dr. NEWMAN asked the Colonial Treasurer, If the debentures of "The New Zealand Loan Act, 1856," were paid off on the 1st July, 1894, by the sinking funds accumulated?

Mr. WARD said the debentures due on the 1st July last issued under "The New Zealand Loan Act, 1856," were paid off on the due date. The operation was effected by conversion under the authority of law, and the accumulated sinking fund thereby realised would be applied in conformity with the provisions of "The Consolidated Stock Act, 1884."

WANGAMOA ACCOMMODATION-HOUSE.

Mr. GRAHAM asked the Premier, What course he will take in reference to a licensed accommodation-house which has existed for many years at Wangamoa on the main road traversed daily by a mail-coach between Nelson and Havelock, such accommodation-house having proved a great and necessary convenience and requirement for the travelling public; but having lost its license shortly before the existing law came into force it could not therefore be regranted without an alteration of the law. A large and influential petition on the subject having been forwarded through the member to His Excellency the Governor, and transmitted by His Excellency to the Premier, will the Government make provision for dealing with exceptional cases of this kind in the Bill to be brought before the House this session? This was a question of some importance to a much larger number of the travelling public than perhaps the Premier was personally aware of. He hoped, therefore, the honourable gentleman would be able to inform him and the House that the Government would make provision in the Licensing Bill for dealing with exceptional cases of the kind referred to, and not simply reply that he (Mr. Graham) could himself endeavour to have such an amendment made when the Bill was in Committee. He thought the Government should provide facilities to enable satisfactory accommodation-houses to be established on lines of road where coaches were daily running over difficult and sometimes dangerous roads, without any accommodation being provided for the travelling public for distances of fifty miles or more. He was not one of those who were in favour of multiplying publichouses, but in this case the people of Nelson could far better afford to do away with at least half a dozen publichouses in the town, —and the same could be said with reference to one-half the licensed houses in Havelock, at the other end of the road,—than that the licensed accommodation-house at Wangamoa should be done away with.

Mr. SEDDON regretted to say that the Bill had arrived at such a stage that it was impossible to include any further amendments in it; otherwise he would be accused of having broken faith with the House in not bringing the Bill down shortly after the Financial Statement. Therefore he was unable to promise the honourable gentleman that he would include his amendment in the Bill. But when

the Bill was before the House the honourable gentleman would be in a position to move an amendment in the direction he had intimated. For his own part, he did not see why an accommodation-house must sell spirituous liquors, for it could afford other creature comforts required by travellers. He knew the place referred to, and the necessity there was for an accommodation-house there: at the same time, when the Bill was in Committee it would be for the honourable gentleman to move in the matter.

Mr. GRAHAM said that, seeing the honourable gentleman knew about this case at least a fortnight ago, he ought not to have made some of the observations he had made.

TARIFF TREATY WITH AUSTRALIA.

Mr. JOYCE asked the Premier, Will the Government afford an early opportunity to the House to discuss to the consummation the proposals in the Treasurer's Budget for a tariff treaty with one or more of the Australasian Colonies? He desired to remind the Premier that an Imperial statute—36 and 37 Vict.—provided that colonies might reciprocate one with the other. He thought that the time had arrived when the Government should take up this question and deal with it vigorously.

Mr. WARD said the Government quite agreed with the honourable gentleman that it was desirable this very important matter should be fully ventilated; and an opportunity would be given to the House to have the matter discussed this session.

Mr. JOYCE asked if the Colonial Treasurer knew the Imperial statute.

Mr. WARD said he did, and in reply to a former question he had stated that they were barred from specially putting on a tariff against the other colonies.

BANK OF NEW ZEALAND.

Mr. JOYCE asked the Premier, What reply will he give to the following: The House having accepted the Budget financial proposals, and placed upon the statute-book a measure whereby the credit of the colony is pledged to the extent of £2,000,000 to save the shareholders of the Bank of New Zealand from great loss or absolute ruin, what precautionary measures will the Government submit to this House this session that the taxpayers of the colony will not be asked to become liable for the failure of other financial institutions? And has the time arrived for the State only to issue the note-circulation "free" or "forced" throughout the colony? In view of what had occurred, he thought he was not wrong in asking that some measures should be taken to prevent a recurrence of the scene on the Friday night when the House was suddenly asked to guarantee the bank to the extent indicated in the question. He thought the present time was most opportune for an extension and enlargement of the postal-note issue, and, to that extent, that the private banks should be prohibited from issuing notes.

Mr. Seddon

Mr. WARD said, in the sense in which the question was put, it had not been found necessary to take any other precautionary measures. The Government had no reason to believe that any other financial institutions would be adversely affected. From the information which the Government possessed, he was glad to be able to say that he believed them to be sound, and in every way able to meet their engagements. The latter portion of the honourable gentleman's question involved a considerable departure of policy—namely, as to controlling the whole of the note-issue. It was a matter which had not yet received the full consideration of the Government. It would, however, be very carefully considered, but he thought nothing was likely to be proposed this session.

A. G. HENGE.

Mr. PIRANI asked the Minister of Justice, If his attention has been drawn to the case of A. G. Henge, who was committed by two Justices to take his trial at the District Court at Palmerston North for theft from the person, but, owing to the provisions of the Criminal Code Act of 1893, the case has to be brought before the Supreme Court; and whether he does not think it advisable that jurisdiction in such cases should be given to the District Courts? Since the question had been put on the Order Paper the man in question had been tried at the Supreme Court in Wellington, and found Not guilty, so that that accentuated more strongly than ever the injustice which had been done in shifting him about from one town to the other until the proper Court at which he was to be tried had been found out.

Mr. CADMAN said it indicated a misapprehension to say that it was owing to the provisions of the Criminal Code Act that the case was to be brought before the Supreme Court. He would read the report of the Clerk of the Court at Palmerston, which would explain the matter. He said,—

"In the case above referred to, an information was laid against A. G. Henge and others for larceny. The information was prepared and laid by the police; and, on being brought before the Justices of the Peace sitting at Palmerston North, Henge was committed for trial at the District Court, the other defendant being discharged for want of evidence. The third information was not brought before the Court, the police not having effected his arrest; but upon the depositions being placed in the hands of the Crown Prosecutor he decided that the charge should have been laid as 'stealing from the person,' which offence is not triable by the District Court. The committed man was therefore again brought up and re-committed for trial at the Supreme Court, Wellington."

BOROUGH BOUNDARIES.

3.30. Mr. BUDDO asked the Government,—As Road Boards and County Councils have no power to object to a borough, when widening its area, making a boundary

to the disadvantage of such Road Board or County Council, would the Government insert a clause in the Municipal Corporations Act Amendment Bill defining their powers in making or extending boundary-lines; also that no boundary can be adopted that is to the disadvantage of other local bodies, without giving the right of appeal to an Arbitration Court? He thought that in making arrangements for the alteration of boundary-lines persons affected outside the boundary-lines which it was proposed to extend should be consulted. It often happened that there were special conditions which made it desirable that suburban residents should be included within a borough, and it was only fair that the local bodies specially interested in these boundaries should have a voice in the matter.

Mr. SEDDON said he hoped that in the course of a few days they would be able to bring down the Corporations Act Amendment Bill, in which they would deal with this phase of the question. He thought the alteration of the boundaries of local bodies was a matter of some moment to the persons outside the boundaries, and they certainly should be consulted, and should not be embraced in any new boundaries without having a voice in the matter.

PHOTOGRAPHS OF "PROHIBITED" PERSONS.

Mr. PIRANI asked the Premier, If he will consider the advisability of inserting a new clause in the Licensing Bill, providing that photographs of prohibited persons be furnished to hotelkeepers affected by such prohibition-orders, at the cost of the persons concerned?

Mr. SEDDON said this proposal had not been received in time, and the Government did not care to deal with the question piecemeal; but, seeing that heavy penalties were now attached to publicans for supplying liquor to prohibited persons, and that there was also a penalty upon the person prohibited, who in many cases scarcely knew what he was doing, he thought it would be well, under the circumstances, that a photograph of the prohibited person should be sent to the publicans.

FRIENDLY SOCIETIES' CHEQUES.

Mr. BUICK asked the Colonial Treasurer, If he will exempt from stamp duty the cheques drawn by friendly societies in favour of members of such societies? He asked this question at the instigation of some of the friendly societies of the colony. He would like to point out that a similar concession had been granted to friendly societies in England and in Australia, and to say that he hoped the Colonial Treasurer would see his way to grant this exemption.

Mr. WARD said the Government were desirous of doing anything in their power to facilitate the business of friendly societies. So far as they could ascertain, however, the amount involved by the remission of stamp duties on cheques would be very insignificant, as in many cases, they were advised, the payments were made in cash. Then, in addition

to involving an amendment of the Act, a special form of cheque-book would have to be prepared for the friendly societies. It was just a question, if this was done, whether it should not be done by direct vote. The Government were of opinion that it was not desirable to alter the Act specially to meet this case.

NEW PLYMOUTH HARBOUR.

Mr. E. M. SMITH asked the Colonial Treasurer,—(1.) If he is aware that certain funds—namely, rates on Crown lands and Native lands—which should have been paid to the New Plymouth Harbour Board by the Colonial Treasurer, have not been so paid? (2.) If he is aware that when the Government withdrew Crown and Native lands from rating there was a distinct agreement that where the rate had been already pledged to pay interest on loans the said rate should still be paid, notwithstanding the withdrawal? This was a very important financial question. If the statements in the question were correct, as he had every reason to believe they were, they showed that the district had not been receiving from the Treasury the money it ought to have received: hence there was another point in their favour, showing that the bondholders had not been treated in that just and fair manner in which they ought to have been treated.

Mr. WARD was sorry to have to inform the honourable gentleman that the statement was not correct in either case. The position was as follows: The liability contracted by the New Plymouth Harbour Board to the debenture-holders was prior to the year 1880. As the Act under which Crown- and Native-land rates were paid was passed in 1882, rates payable under it could not possibly have been pledged as security, and they therefore ceased to be payable after 1890, when the repeal took effect. He thought the honourable gentleman would therefore see that no injustice had been done in the matter.

MCARTHUR-FORREST CYANIDE GOLD-EXTRACTION PROCESS.

Mr. MCGOWAN asked the Government, If they will enter into negotiation with the patentees or owners of the McArthur-Forrest cyanide gold-extraction process, with a view to secure the rights of such process for New Zealand?

Mr. CADMAN said it was very doubtful whether the McArthur-Forrest cyanide gold-extraction process would stand the test of a Court of law if it were tried, as far as the patent was concerned, in this colony. Therefore the Government did not see their way to enter into negotiations for its purchase; but they had hopes of great results from their schools of mines, especially from the School of Mines at the Thames, which was fast getting a leading position in attending to processes of this sort. Experiments and improvements were being made at the Thames School of Mines, especially in respect of dealing with refractory and complex ores, so that they were

not without hope that within a short space of time the cyanide extraction process would be altogether superseded.

INGLEWOOD STIPENDIARY MAGISTRATE'S COURT.

Mr. MCGUIRE asked the Minister of Justice,—(1.) Will the Government cause periodical sittings of the Magistrate's Court to be held at Inglewood? (2.) Will he provide sufficient Courthouse accommodation at Inglewood for the Stipendiary Magistrate and suitors, in keeping with the progressive town of Inglewood and surrounding districts? Inglewood was a fairly large town, and it had no periodical sitting of the Stipendiary Magistrate's Court. Applications for such sittings had frequently been made, but for some reason they had always been refused. The district was thickly populated, and the people were put to great inconvenience by having to go to New Plymouth and other places, and were also put to great expense. He trusted that the Minister of Justice would see his way to arrange for periodical sittings of the Magistrate's Court there, and also to provide Court accommodation.

Mr. CADMAN said he was afraid he should not be able to grant the honourable gentleman's request just yet. During the last twelve months there had only been thirteen criminal and forty civil cases in and around Inglewood that had been tried at New Plymouth and other places. At the same time, he desired to say that the country districts between New Plymouth, Wellington, and Hawke's Bay were so fast increasing in population that it would be necessary shortly to try to arrange for placing another Magistrate in some portion of the district. Until that time arrived he should not be able to do anything in this matter.

NIGHT-WATCHMEN AND MESSENGERS.

Dr. NEWMAN asked the Government, if they will, in future, when making appointments such as night-watchmen, messengers, &c., give the preference to any one who has lost an arm or leg, or is otherwise maimed? There were a considerable number of men in this colony who, through various accidents, had lost an arm or a leg, or were otherwise incapacitated. It was exceedingly hard that the Minister of Labour, who affected always to be so much interested in labour, should jeer at a proposal like this; for, as a matter of fact, there were a considerable number of people in this unhappy position, and he thought they might be put in the position of caretakers about Government buildings, or as night-watchmen, and in that way find a means of earning a living, which they could not do otherwise.

Mr. REEVES said he had not jeered at the question of the honourable gentleman. If laughter had come from his direction it had come from some one else, and not from him. The Government recognised that the proposal, as the honourable member for New Plymouth would say, was a very important one. They had taken it into consideration, and would have no

difficulty in keeping the one-legged gentlemen steadily in view; but they had doubts as to whether a night-watchman might not, in the case of an outbreak of fire, be all the better for having two arms, and whether a messenger might not be all the better for having two legs when his services were wanted in a hurry, as the services of messengers frequently were. Ministers were inclined to think that there was something underlying this question, and to see a connection between it and the honourable gentleman's proposal to fill the Lower Chamber with ladies, but had grave doubts as to whether, when that great change took place, there would not be even greater objections to using men who had been retrenched in the manner indicated in the question than there were now. The fact was that messengers, whether used by men or by women legislators, were frequently required to do work quickly. It was unfortunately the case, therefore, that they could not see their way to employ these men in the manner suggested. For stationary employment, he thought it would be a good thing to do what they possibly could for them: for instance, the Railway Commissioners might find work for them, and he thought they did find work for men who had been mutilated in this manner—but not to carry messages or to use their hands.

ALCOHOLIC LIQUORS SALE CONTROL BILL.

This Bill was read a first time.

Mr. G. J. SMITH asked the Premier when this Bill was likely to be circulated amongst honourable members.

Mr. SEDDON might say, in answer to the honourable gentleman's question, that he hoped the Bill would be circulated in the course of a few minutes amongst honourable members, and he also desired to assure the honourable gentleman that what he promised to the House would be fully realised, and that the Bill would be found to please the extremists, the moderates, the trade, and the people generally, and would give more general satisfaction than the Act of last session.

Mr. G. J. SMITH hoped the honourable gentleman was not calling him an extremist.

Mr. SEDDON.—Certainly not.

ADJOURNMENT.

Mr. R. MCKENZIE moved the adjournment of the House. He might say that he was not at all satisfied with the answer given by the Premier to the question which he had put with regard to the Midland Railway. The Premier was very much mistaken in blaming him for taking up the time of the House on the previous evening and until six o'clock this morning, for he had only spoken twice in Committee, and then only for some fifteen minutes during a ten hours' sitting.

Mr. SEDDON said he knew the honourable gentleman was not responsible for the protracted hour to which the House had sat on the previous night.

Mr. Cadman

Mr. R. McKENZIE said that if the Premier was not one of the chief offenders he was certainly to blame to a very great extent for that protracted and useless sitting. Now, coming to the Midland Railway question, it was a most important question to the whole colony, and to the district which he had the honour to represent in particular. He presented a petition in the early days of the session signed by 250 persons, asking that this railway should be proceeded with. That petition was referred to a Committee, and he had never heard anything about it from that day to this. The matter had now been before the Committee for six or seven weeks, and he thought it time that Committee sent up some report. This Midland Railway contract was the means of stopping settlement to a considerable extent on the West Coast. There were between two and three hundred applicants for land in the Buller district, and they could not get an acre owing to the existence of this Midland Railway reserve. The history of this Midland Railway contract was a most remarkable series of blunders from beginning to end: in fact, he might say that the manner in which the provisions of that contract had been carried out did not reflect any great credit on the business capabilities of the gentlemen who managed matters in connection with it on behalf of the colony, from its inception until now. Therefore he thought it was high time a statement was made by the Government as to the position of this contract. The whole thing was now hanging up before the Midland Railway Committee. A few members knew something about it, but the very large majority of members knew nothing whatever about it, or whether anything was likely to be done—the Premier would not enlighten them. That was the object of his moving the adjournment of the House—in order to get some reply to the petition he had presented. It was understood that they were to go into the question very early in the session; but it appeared to him that it was being put off to the very end of the session, so as to give honourable members very little time to consider the matter. He hoped the Premier would make some reasonable statement, and not treat the matter with the happy-go-lucky levity he exhibited in answering the question. It was too serious a matter to be treated lightly. The people of the colony expected something better than that from the Government.

Mr. McLACHLAN could indorse the remarks of the honourable member for the Buller. In the part of Canterbury he came from there was a very strong desire on the part of public bodies and private individuals that this railway should be proceeded with. Settlement, and the opening-up of communication between the East and the West Coasts, had been stopped. They were told some years ago that they should have the railway, or burst. A number of people had burst, and they attributed the fact to the railway not having been proceeded with. He referred to the present contract; and the Government would not

be doing their duty if they did not push on the railway themselves, or compel the contractors to do it. If not, the Government would not have a majority in Canterbury at the next election. It was the general opinion in Canterbury that the Government had been more lax in regard to this railway than in regard to any other part of the public service. Whether the difficulties had been greater than they could overcome he did not know. He had been pressed to urge upon the Government to have the railway proceeded with. It did not matter to the people of Canterbury whether it was proceeded with by the company or by the Government, so long as it was proceeded with. Therefore he supported the motion of the honourable member for the Buller.

Mr. SEDDON was not surprised at the action taken by the honourable member for the Buller, because he was opposed to this company and to the construction of this railway, and always had been. He had always been opposed to this contract, and he (Mr. Seddon) was not, therefore, surprised at the action he had taken, as what he had done to some extent prejudiced the position. A debate now upon the question was simply nothing more or less than a sheer waste of time. He had stated that the Committee was to have met that day to consider their report. The Committee would have met that day had it not been that members went home at a rather late hour, and it was impossible for members, under the circumstances, to attend the Committee. But he hoped the Committee would meet next day and bring down their report. Under these circumstances, he did not think the action of the honourable member for the Buller was reasonable. As to the question stated by the honourable member for Ashburton, that the Government had delayed dealing with this question, the Government could not stop the whole business of the House simply to deal with the Midland Railway Company. They had their financial proposals before the House. They had gone on with their Standing Orders; then there were their main policy Bills; then the financial debate, and it was only the other day that debate was completed. They then went on with the Land for Settlements Bill. He reckoned that to be of much more importance to Canterbury than was the Midland Railway question. His colleague the Minister of Lands was not well, and he had desired to go on with the Land for Settlements Bill, but he was blocked by this debate. Honourable members should be reasonable. When it came to be a question of what was going to happen to the Government in Canterbury unless they did what the honourable member for the Buller wanted them to do, let him say this: that such remarks, so far as the Government were concerned, would not cause them to deviate from what they considered the right course. They would deal with this question in the interests of the colony and of the districts immediately interested. That was how they had always dealt with it. This was a large and very complicated question, and if the honourable mem-

ber knew as much as he (Mr. Seddon) knew, and as much as some other honourable members knew, he never would have said what he said on this question. He would say it was not friendly to the Government. The Government had a most difficult question in hand. It required to be handled in such a way that the matter should come before the House fairly and without prejudice. The remarks that had been made by the honourable gentleman would prejudice the matter. He (Mr. Seddon) knew that great anxiety existed on the part of the people of Canterbury to have this railway proceeded with. He knew that large areas of land had been locked up for years in Canterbury, and also on the West Coast, and it was their duty to remove that embargo as soon as they could. On the other hand, they must not deal unfairly with the company. They must treat their proposals fairly. These proposals had been referred to the Committee. It was only the previous day that he received a very important letter from the company dealing with this question. In the face of that, he did not think it was fair that honourable members should accuse the Government of playing with this important subject. It was a matter that caused great anxiety to the Government in their desire to do what was right and just to the colony and to the districts immediately concerned, and he regretted that any debate should have arisen at this stage.

Mr. McLACHLAN said it was not the want of attention this session that he referred to, but it was the want of attention of the Government last session.

Mr. EARNSHAW supported the motion of the honourable member for the Buller. It was really laughable for the Premier to get up and talk about its being waste of time to stop business to talk about the Midland Railway. It was the Premier's own action the night before that caused a waste of time, in keeping honourable members there until six o'clock to ram through that House—

Mr. SPEAKER.—That debate cannot be referred to.

Mr. EARNSHAW.—I am not referring to that debate.

Mr. SPEAKER.—I am to decide that point, and in my opinion the honourable gentleman is referring to the debate of last night; and that is not allowed.

Mr. EARNSHAW said he was showing that it was by the past action of the Premier that the Midland Railway Committee was not able to meet that morning. The responsibility for the Midland Railway Committee not meeting that morning rested entirely with the Premier, and therefore it was simply idle to say that the honourable member for the Buller was wasting time in moving the adjournment. But what he got up to speak about was the remark from the honourable member for Ashburton; and upon that remark turned the whole question of

4.0. this Midland Railway proposal and the capture of the Canterbury vote. The Canterbury voting on this question was the evidence, and, when the honourable member for

Mr. Seddon

Ashburton said the Government would not have half the Canterbury vote next year unless they dealt with this Midland Railway question in a satisfactory manner, that simply implied that they must deal with it in a manner that would be satisfactory to Canterbury.

An Hon. MEMBER.—Not necessarily. Mr. EARNSHAW said that "absolutely" would be more true. He said the House ought to pause when that measure was before them which the Government proposed to bring down, owing to the responsibility they took upon themselves; and he did not think the honourable member for the Buller had wasted time in moving the adjournment, if even its only effect had been to obtain the very explicit statement that now for the first time had been made in the House by the Canterbury members—that the Ministry would have their support just in proportion as they were prepared to support the Midland Railway.

Mr. SEDDON, rising to a personal explanation, said the honourable gentleman who had just sat down had charged him with being responsible for the Committee not meeting this morning to deal with this question. The gentleman, however, who was really responsible was the honourable member for Dunedin City (Mr. Earnshaw) himself, as he had stated that he would stonewall a certain Bill until the morning, and he had done so.

Sir R. STOUT said that was not a personal explanation.

Mr. G. W. RUSSELL rose to protest against the remarks of the honourable member for Dunedin City (Mr. Earnshaw). The people in Canterbury were very anxious indeed that this West Coast railway should be made; there could be no doubt about that. It was a great colonial work, and it had always been recognised to be so by both sides of the House. Also, so much money had been spent in connection with that work that it was perfectly ridiculous to attempt, at this stage, to try to make that expenditure nugatory, or to prevent the work from being carried out. At the same time, he must say that he agreed somewhat with the remarks of the honourable member for Ashburton—at least, in one particular. He could not help thinking that the present Government, since they took office, had not endeavoured, with that sincerity which Canterbury had a right to expect, to push on this work. And there was a strong feeling on the part of the Canterbury people that, whatever the honourable gentleman might have done as Minister for Public Works, yet since his accession to the position of Premier he had not done that which might fairly have been expected from him in the way of pushing on negotiations in connection with the matter to a successful issue. If the Government wished to retain that hold upon the people of Canterbury which they had gained in consequence of the Liberal principles which they had advocated in days past they must do Canterbury justice in connection with this Midland Railway. Not only would it provide work, but it would open up a large quantity of

land which would provide homes for hundreds of people—land that had been locked up for years past. What the people of Canterbury wanted was that this land should be brought back into the hands of the people, so that it might be administered, not by an irresponsible company, but by the people of the colony, under the Liberal land-laws of the present Government. There should be no difficulty in the Government meeting the company in a liberal way in order to bring matters to a successful issue. But constant friction between the company and the Government appeared to be set up for the purpose of preventing the negotiations coming to a successful and satisfactory conclusion as soon as they might. This matter had dragged on its weary length year after year. The Government must, in their own interests and in the interests of their party, take up this question and bring it to a successful issue this session, so that the unemployed of Canterbury might obtain an opening for their labour in connection with the Midland Railway; and many of the friends of the Government would be left behind at the next election unless justice were done to Canterbury in this particular matter.

Mr. GRAHAM had no intention of following the honourable gentleman who had just sat down in attempting to precipitate a debate on the Midland Railway question. That would come on in due course. At the same time, he could not help saying that he sympathized with the honourable member for the Buller in not being satisfied with the answer given him by the Premier. That answer was to the effect that if they had gone home at an earlier hour last night they might have been able to have their Committee-meeting on this question, and been able now to report to the House. Nobody knew better than the Premier that it was simply impossible for the Committee to have sat and reported to the House that day. It was resolved, at the last meeting, that the next meeting should take place to-morrow; but the sub-committee was to have held a meeting this morning; and, notwithstanding the advanced hour at which the House rose that morning, a majority of the sub-committee was present at the meeting, and was only prevented from doing business by the absence of the Premier. He thought the Premier, in view of that, and of the early hour at which the House rose having had the effect of preventing the honourable gentleman from attending to those very important duties, ought to assist those members of the House who were desirous that they should carry on the business of the country, and conclude their work in the House, at reasonable hours. He believed it was the desire of at least one-half the members of the House that their work should be completed at reasonable hours. The effect of these long sittings was that very important Committee-work had to be neglected. A number of Committees were called for to-day—he himself had to attend two of them—and while he was trying, along with others, to procure a quorum, so that the work for which the Committees were called

might go on—and he found other people doing the same thing—he was asked to assist in making a quorum for a Committee which comprised eighteen members, and they could only secure the attendance of five members; consequently no business was done. It was all very well for the Government to set up Committees at the commencement of the session for the purpose of making the country imagine that they were trying to do the work that was needed in the interests of the country. There were some very important Committees set up, and unless they had time to attend to their Committee-work properly, in addition to the work which the members were called upon to do in the House, no satisfactory recommendations could come from them; consequently a very great deal of valuable time was wasted. Members had to sit in the House from ten to fifteen hours a day, and had to do Committee-work outside that, and to try to get some little knowledge of the multifarious Bills that were brought before them, and which the Government were seeking to pass during one session; and, unless they had more time granted them, they could not do work that would be in the interests and for the welfare of the country. He suggested that Ministers should take into serious consideration the necessity of allowing the House to observe more reasonable hours than they had done up to the present. It would, he could assure them, be far better, so far as the interests of the country were concerned, than the practice they were now following. It was of no use trying to make the country believe they were performing their duties,—and very important duties were set them, with a view of relieving the burdens of the people as far as possible,—if these Committees were not allowed sufficient time to be able to properly discharge the duties devolving upon them in these capacities. He would just like to say one word with reference to the Premier's reply to his own question in regard to providing a proper accommodation-house on the main coach-road between Nelson and Havelock. As he had said before, he was not an advocate for increasing the public-house licenses in Nelson. They had also far too many in Kumara, the big city on the West Coast, the honourable gentleman's own district, which had some two dozen publichouses. However, in connection with the question he had asked, he had pointed out that the distance by this road from Nelson to Havelock was fifty-one miles, and that for forty-three miles of this distance there was no accommodation-house of any kind; it was very hilly and difficult country, where accidents might and sometimes did happen, and without a sufficient number of accommodation-houses it was very awkward in cases of that kind, especially when travelling by coach in rough and boisterous weather. With all due deference to the Premier's remarks, it was desirable that travellers should be able to obtain on the road those comforts that one might expect, and by that he did not necessarily mean the getting of spirits. Still, the Premier knew quite well the

value of stimulants in certain cases, and was himself probably just as anxious as any one else to get something to stave off the evil results of getting wet, and thus, probably, prevent serious illness. The Premier stated it was quite too late in the session for him to incorporate any such amendment as he (Mr. Graham) suggested in the present Bill, inasmuch as it was already in print and ready for circulation. The honourable gentleman could not deny that there were far too many public-houses in some districts. But where they were required really for the accommodation of *bonâ fide* travellers, along main roads traversed by the mail-coaches, the Government should have the backbone to bring down a Bill providing for the necessary accommodation of the public in this respect. It was all very well to tell the people, as the Premier did last year, that he was bringing down a Bill which would satisfy the extremists on both sides, as well as the moderates; but he had not done so. He (Mr. Graham) expected the result would again be, that he would bring down a Bill which would satisfy no one. He regretted very much that the Premier had not thought proper to take notice of a matter like this and make provision for it in the Bill, seeing that nearly three weeks ago he had had the matter brought under his notice by a very large and influentially-signed petition, as well as personally by himself (Mr. Graham).

Mr. SEDDON thought it was only fair to honourable members who had been charged with neglecting the meetings of Committees that day that he should mention that it was agreed, when the House adjourned at an early hour in the morning, that the Committees were not to sit to-day. When a number of members went off to bed at an early hour, leaving a few to do the work that had to be done, it was understood there were to be no Committees to-day; and, that being the case, it was unfair to blame him for stopping the Committees, when the House agreed to it.

Mr. GRAHAM said he left the House at half-past two that morning, a sufficiently late hour, he thought, for any one; but, in addition to that, he came to the Buildings again this morning at half-past nine, prepared to attend Committee meetings. One member told him the Premier had given him the statement he had just made, that no Committees were to sit; but no steps had been taken to give effect to that. He (Mr. Graham) then inquired of a Minister, and was told that no steps had been taken to stop the Committees. If a quorum attended, Committees would certainly sit, and he knew that several Committees had done so that day; he was on one himself. Unless efficient steps were taken to give effect to them, statements, made by the Premier to a half-empty House, that no Committees would sit, could only lead to confusion, and to annoyance on the part of members.

Mr. MCGOWAN said it was with a great deal of interest he noticed the kind of advice the Government got on this question. Some of the advice came apparently in a friendly way

Mr. Graham

from honourable members wishing to tell the Government how to carry on their business. Then there was advice from another quarter coupled with a kind of threat, almost telling them how they should conduct their business; and these honourable gentlemen, it appeared to him, although there was some difference in their ideas in other ways, made manifest the fact that their idea of what was justice and what was fair was the construction of the Midland Railway. That was their sole idea; and that was the work the whole country was waiting for, in their estimation. He noticed that the honourable member for Dunedin City's (Mr. Earnshaw's) idea of justice was the construction of the Otago Central line. Now, he (Mr. McGowan) congratulated the Government on taking up the position they had taken up in respect to these matters, and he hoped that in that House they never would have a Government that would seek to obtain the votes of any section of honourable members for the sake of the public works that would be carried on in their particular districts. He hoped the Government would carry on their public works apart from all such considerations, even at the risk of losing the votes of such honourable gentlemen. That was the view he held—that the Government should continue to carry on its business without reference to the number of votes they might obtain by carrying on public works in certain districts.

Mr. O'REGAN said he had not been making any efforts to bring pressure to bear upon the Government by saying that unless they took certain action he would consider his position; but he would like to say that the matter of the Midland Railway had been quite long enough hung up for the West Coast, and he wished to impress upon the Government the desirability of taking final steps in the matter.

Mr. EARNSHAW wished to make a personal explanation with regard to a remark which had just fallen from the honourable member for the Thames. He had never put any pressure upon the Government with regard to the Otago Central, more than for the absorption of the annual vote the Government themselves had asked the House to pass for the purpose.

Mr. MEREDITH said he had, a few days ago, received a copy of a manifesto issued by a junta of gentlemen in Christchurch calling upon him, as a Canterbury member, to bring his influence to bear on the Government to insist on the Government coming to terms with the Midland Railway Company for the prosecution of the East and West Coast line. He considered it an improper interference with his rights as a member of that House for those belonging to a different electorate from that he had the honour to represent to tell him that he must take this or that course of action in reference to certain public questions. The statement made by the honourable member for Dunedin City (Mr. Earnshaw)—that the members for Canterbury had informed the Government that unless that work was carried on they

would withdraw their sympathy and support—was not correct.

Mr. EARNSHAW said he had quoted the words of the honourable member for Ashburton.

Mr. MEREDITH said, if those were the words of the honourable member for Ashburton, he must have spoken for himself, and could not have spoken for others representing the different electorates in the Canterbury District. He held very decided views on this question; he had been opposed to the Midland Railway from the start. He had considered, and did consider now—though he might not be right—that the whole thing would turn out a white elephant. He was prepared to defend the action of the Government on this question. The Government had done all they could do: in fact, he considered that they had yielded too often to the overtures of the company, and had made too many concessions to it.

Mr. TANNER.—What Government?

Mr. MEREDITH.—The Government now in office, and the late Government. He had been much pleased to support, at the close of last session, the resolution then submitted by the Premier, and he then thought that would be the ultimatum,—that they would have heard no more about it, and that an Empowering Bill, embodying the resolution, would be introduced at the beginning of this session, and the construction of the railway would have been gone on with. But what did they find? They found the representatives of the company again waiting on the Government, and lobbying with members, with a view of getting the contract again modified, and that always in the interests of the company. He was about sick of the whole thing, and said that the Government should call on the company to carry out the construction of the line on the terms agreed to at the close of last Parliament; or else let them throw it up, and let the line be finished by Government. He was as much interested in the question as any member of the House. A large proportion of the land within the Midland Railway area was within the Provincial Districts of Canterbury, Nelson, and Marlborough, and therefore was in his electorate, and he was very desirous that that land should revert to the Government for settlement purposes. He was not at all satisfied with the way in which lands held by the company had been dealt with in the past; they had been mostly sold in large blocks, at a low figure, and had gone towards the aggregation of large estates. He wished the Government to understand distinctly that outside Christchurch there was no very strong feeling in reference to the question. Let them, now it had been commenced, have the line completed; but he reiterated that he did not wish the Government to make any further concessions to the company.

Mr. TANNER said he had no wish to join in the discussion. He was a member of the Committee elected by the House to consider the correspondence that had taken place between the Government and the Midland Railway

Company since last session, and he was a member of similar Committees two years ago, and last year, when the Midland Railway Company had brought a petition before them, which was considered very exhaustively. He rose to ask two or three questions of honourable members who, during the last few minutes, had been speaking very freely and making statements which, he believed, they were not in a position to substantiate. He would like the last speaker to define what he meant by speaking of the concessions made by the Government now in power to the Midland Railway Company. Would he name any concession made by the Government now in power to the Midland Railway Company? Would he name any member of the House who had put himself into such a censurable position as to allow himself to be trifled with by the agents of the company in what was known as lobbying? If he knew of any such honourable member, let him name that member now, so that the rest of them might know the kind of man they were meeting with day by day. He defied the honourable member to name any member who so far forgot the dignity and responsibility of his place in the House as to put himself into the position indicated by the honourable gentleman. As to the advice so freely given to Ministers, if some of the speakers were possessed of such an intimate knowledge of the subject, and were so well able to give counsel, they might bestow a little of the wisdom which distinguished them, in common with Solomon, on the members of the Committee themselves. They would be pleased, if those honourable gentlemen were prepared with so much advice, to have some intimation of the course which should be followed by the Committee in bringing certain recommendations before the House to deal with the subject, which they were bound to do in a few days. The Committee knew how difficult it was. The members who had spoken might have before them the correspondence that had taken place between the Government and the company, so as to be in possession of the facts of the case as well as the Committee, and if, in their wisdom, they were prepared to give advice, let them tender it to the Committee within the next twelve or eighteen hours, so that it might be available at the meeting on the following day.

Mr. BUDDO was sorry to detain the House, but it seemed to have come to be generally understood that every representative from Canterbury had given a pledge to support the Midland Railway Company. Personally, he had given no pledge on the matter, and had had no communication with the Government on the question. No doubt the railway would be finished some day, but when he was not prepared to say. Possibly it would be in the far-distant future, when settlement would be at a more advanced stage, and there might be some likelihood of its paying some little return for the money expended on it. Of course, the whole scheme had been badly devised from the beginning. The Government should by all

means have carried out the railway themselves if it was to be constructed at all: in fact, this was just one more reason against the Government giving way to popular clamour on any question; and they should strengthen the Government in these matters, and see that they were not prevailed upon by any section of the community to carry out schemes which were neither in the interests of the colony nor to the credit of the Legislature of the colony. As they had got into a difficulty it was the duty of the Government to get out of it as well as possible; but he did trust that whatever was done would be done by the Government, and with no reference to any private interests of any corporation whatever.

Mr. G. HUTCHISON did not propose to say anything about the Midland Railway, as he considered the discussion on that subject to be entirely premature, and calculated to prejudice rather than to advance the settlement of the important questions to be determined. He proposed, however, to take the opportunity of referring to the answer given by the Colonial Treasurer to the honourable member for New Plymouth with reference to the payment of rates on Crown lands in the Land District of Taranaki. The answer given by the Treasurer seemed to run upon a misapprehension. The Treasurer referred to the fact that the loan had been floated before the passing, in 1880, of the Crown and Native Lands Rating Act. That was not the point. The point was that, when that Act was repealed, in 1888, there was a saving clause in favour of rates made and levied prior to the repeal of the Act. There was then a rate made and levied, which had been levied for some years, and had been an annually-recurring rate, in the New Plymouth Harbour Rating District for the purpose of meeting the interest on the loan which was in existence at the time of the repeal of the Act in 1888. He could remember that when the Repeal Act was passing the case of the New Plymouth Harbour Board was distinctly referred to, and the House was given to understand that the saving clause—the 2nd subsection of section 4—would have the effect of continuing the payment of rates on Crown lands to the New Plymouth Harbour Board. The amount was something considerable, there being a large amount of Crown lands in that district; and if the rates had continued to be paid, as was understood would be done, probably no default would have been made by the Board in the interest on the loan. So far as he could see, the Treasury was indebted to the Harbour Board for arrears of rates after the time they ceased to be paid up to the present.

Mr. E. M. SMITH would read the following memorandum:—

“The Crown and Native Lands Rating Act was repealed in 1888, but rating was allowed to be continued by the repealing Act until 1st April, 1890.

“There is a saving clause which provides that the repeal of the Rating Acts shall not take away the power of any local body to col-

lect a rate which had been made and levied before 1st April, 1890.”

He would content himself with putting this on record, until the Government gave the House an opportunity to discuss the whole financial proposals of the Harbour Board, which Board, if the Government adopted their proposals, would be found to be in a splendid financial position.

Mr. R. McKENZIE said the Premier was hardly correct in his facts in saying that he (Mr. McKenzie) was against the Midland Railway—that he always had been and always would be. As a matter of fact, he had not been always against the railway, and was not against carrying it out even now. But he was certainly against, and always would protest against, a band of adventurers being allowed to trick and fleece the people of the colony, as the people connected with the Midland Railway Company had been endeavouring to do for years. They had prevented settlement, and had never attempted to carry out their contract in the straightforward and honest manner that any other contractor would be compelled to do. In reference to some of the remarks made by Canterbury members, he would always consider it his duty, in the interests of the rest of the colony, to go against any small band of members who formed themselves into a combination to force any useless public work on the colony. He would consider it his duty to support the Go-

4.30. vernment against any section of members who entertained ideas of that sort. The honourable member for Ashley had stated that too many concessions had been made to the company. He was entirely of that opinion. He maintained that far too many concessions had been made to the company; and the company was endeavouring to get a number of very large concessions at the present time. The honourable member for Avon asked what those concessions were. He did not wish to go into the matter very fully that day, as the question would come before the House again; but he would mention a few of those concessions, for the honourable gentleman's information. The company had been allowed to make an incline over Arthur's Pass, instead of a tunnel.

An Hon. MEMBER.—Not this Government.

Mr. R. McKENZIE did not say the concession was given by this Government. That concession would save the company a very large amount of money indeed. He did not know what return they proposed to give the colony for that concession. They were also allowed to make a deviation of line from one side of Lake Brunner to the other. That was a very considerable concession. Then, the greatest concession of all was, that the contract had not been cancelled years ago. It should have been cancelled long before this Government came into office, as the work was not carried out as it ought to have been according to the contract. He thought the Government would be perfectly justified in taking every step necessary to cancel the contract, and not to allow the

Mr. Buddo

company to continue humbugging the people of the colony as they had done for years. He would refer further to this subject when the report was received from the Committee.

Mr. SEDDON said, with the indulgence of the House, and in the interest of the House and the colony, he desired to express his regret that the promoters of the company had been termed "adventurers."

Motion for adjournment negatived.

LAND FOR SETTLEMENTS BILL.

Mr. J. McKENZIE.—It is not my intention to occupy the attention of the House for very many minutes on the present occasion. It is my intention to move the third reading of the Bill without having it recommitted. I will, in as few words as possible, explain to the House my reasons for not asking the House to recommit this Bill. I think the measure now, as a whole, will be a very fair one. The small amendments which it is necessary to make in the Bill are consequential amendments in view of the amendments made in Committee. These amendments have been duly considered by the Law Officers of the Crown, and are simply, as I have said, consequential amendments. I think they can be made in another place. As to the constitution of the Board, honourable members will recollect that on the second reading I stated to the House that I thought the constitution of the Board was a fair question for this House to determine. I said I would abide by the decision of the House on the question of the constitution of the Board. I dare say honourable members may think I was rather arbitrary in stating what portions of the Bill I would make Government questions and what portions I would not. The questions that I thought of so much importance that they should be considered by the Government as Government questions have been carried by large majorities in the House; and the constitution of the Board, which I did not make a Government question—which I said I was prepared to take the decision of the House upon—I am prepared to accept. There is one small amendment which will be required in the clause which constitutes the Board: three, being the quorum out of five members who were proposed in the original clause of the Bill, will have to be altered to two, because it will be almost impossible sometimes to get three members of the Board together. I think, on the whole, we have got a fair and honest Board. If this Bill becomes law and I have to administer it, I shall ask the Board always to get the best local expert evidence that can be got in the districts. In my opinion, that will be necessary for the purpose of enabling the Board to come to a proper decision as to whether the land is really required for settlement, and whether it is suitable for settlement, and as to its value. I think, to enable proper decisions to be arrived at, the Board should get the assistance of local experts in each district. There were three other questions I promised to consider, and the first of these was raised by the honourable member for Wel-

lington City (Sir R. Stout)—whether section 19 of the Act—which is now section 20—is contrary to the Land Act. I am informed by the Law Officers of the Crown that it is not, but I intend to have a few words inserted in it to put the matter beyond doubt. There was another question I promised to consider—a question raised by the honourable member for Palmerston in connection with small grazing-runs. I am informed by the Law Officers of the Crown that it is not legal to make a freehold of small grazing-runs in the way which he states. Then there was the amendment of the honourable member for Palmerston as to the manner in which estates should be taken. I have fully considered his proposal, and I have come to the conclusion that it is impossible to lay down a cast-iron rule in reference to the way in which estates should be taken. Any such rule would hamper the members of the Board in connection with the taking of land for settlement. To put in a cast-iron clause would force the Board into taking certain estates according to the amount of cultivation upon them, regardless of other considerations, and would, in my opinion, hamper the Board very much in some parts of the colony. I therefore did not think it advisable to adopt his suggestion. The Bill has been so thoroughly discussed in Committee that it is not my intention to raise any further discussion on its principles now. We have had the matter fought out very fairly in the House. Every member has had a full opportunity of expressing his views on the various provisions of the Bill. As I said before, the important principles of the Bill have been agreed to by large majorities, and it is therefore quite unnecessary on my part, I think, to say anything further on the subject. And I believe the House will now pass the third reading of the Bill, and allow me to have these small amendments which I have indicated made in another place. The House will also have the opportunity of considering the Bill when it comes back to us again. Before I sit down I have to thank honourable members for the very great care and trouble they have taken in connection with the Bill. I hope that anything that has been said in Committee in the heat of debate, and in the desire of each honourable member to carry his own proposal, will be forgotten as soon as the Bill becomes law. I hope the Bill will pass another place; and if it does pass, and if I occupy my present position, I shall endeavour to have an honest administration carried out under the Bill. I beg to move the third reading of the Bill.

Mr. PIRANI.—I should like to ask, Sir, if it is competent for this Bill to be amended in another place, as it is a money Bill.

Mr. SPEAKER.—The money clauses cannot be altered; but the other clauses of the Bill, that do not affect money, can, of course, be amended.

Mr. BELL.—The honourable gentleman promised to inquire whether it was unnecessary to insert the words "borrow on debenture" in clause 10, so as to avoid the construction that

the Minister might have power to borrow £250,000 twice over.

Mr. J. McKENZIE.—If it is not in the Bill, I will have it put in another place.

Captain RUSSELL.—I recognise that it is impossible to do anything to stop the passage of this Bill. When it was at the second-reading stage, I gave my reasons at considerable length for disagreeing with its principles. When the Bill was passing through Committee, my reasons for disliking the measure were increased rather than modified. As the Minister of Lands has told us, the measure was discussed very fully indeed as it passed through Committee; but he forgot to tell the House this: Though there was very great discussion in Committee, and though there were many reasons alleged why modifications in the Bill would benefit the Bill and be for the good of the country also, the honourable gentleman resolutely insisted that the Government majority should do exactly as he wished, and that there should be no alterations, however desirable alterations might be. There were one or two suggestions which I propose now to allude to, inasmuch as it seemed to me that they were based upon nothing but a perfect spirit of fairness, and would not have interfered in any degree whatsoever with the spirit of the measure, but would have removed, to a certain extent, at any rate, the feeling of dissatisfaction which pervades the mind of almost every owner of land in the colony in regard to some clauses of this Bill. I have no doubt that many persons listening to me now will say that the feeling of the landowner is a matter of perfect indifference—that it is of no consequence what he likes or does not like. To me, at any rate, that appears a very short-sighted policy. To have a contented people is surely the first step towards having a prosperous people; and if once it is felt that the tenure of land in this colony is to be seriously disturbed it will materially affect the general prosperity of the people. No doubt it may be said that this Bill only attacks owners of a certain area, and that persons have no right to hold land in large areas. It may be true that at the present moment this Bill does only affect holdings of a considerable area, but, seeing that there are millions of acres of land still in the hands of the Crown, and millions of acres still in the hands of the Natives, lying unproductive, there is no reason why persons should not hold considerable areas of land until the whole of the estate of the Crown and the waste lands of the colony in the hands of the Natives have come into profitable occupation; and therefore when we speak of persons holding large areas of land we ought to bear in mind that it is inevitable, in the early colonisation of a country, that land shall be held in large areas, if the country is to progress. No doubt the day does come when it is held to be injurious for persons to be in occupation of large areas of land; but no one can argue that the time has yet come in New Zealand when it is not possible to get areas of land for persons anxious to make homes for themselves. But

one of the main features which seem to me to be so inimical to family welfare in this matter was the refusal even to consider the proposal which I put upon the Supplementary Order Paper, and which I wished, at any rate, to have a fair discussion upon in this House. Long after we wished to go to bed—long after it was desirable that honourable members should be released from their arduous day's work—this amendment came on,—not for discussion, but it came before the House. Sir, no person would then condescend to take the trouble to argue to show that it was wrong. The Minister of Lands let it be known that he did not choose to accept it, and then gentlemen who ordinarily are not dumb would not take the trouble even to argue the matter out. Why people should refuse discussion I cannot understand. If members on this side of the House had during any portion of the debates in Committee evinced a spirit of obstruction, a desire to stonewall the Bill, I could understand then that a policy of retaliation would have been inevitable. The Minister would have been justified in going so far as to say—he would have been perfectly justified in meeting force by force and saying, “If members are going simply to obstruct, I will with an iron hand put down the stonewall.” But there was no attempt at stonewall—no attempt to obstruct. One might almost say, indeed, that there was no attempt to fairly force upon the House the necessity of argument. But yet we were not allowed to proceed; we were simply told there should be no discussion. As we sat in Committee, we could see the Minister urging his supporters to be quiet and to go on with the Bill. To go on with the Bill meant, in that case, to go through with it whether it was right or wrong. Now, Sir, one amendment I moved upon a firm conviction that when persons had families, and when these families were approaching an age to go upon the land, it would be proper to allow these children to have a right to the land before strangers. The Minister of Lands said “No,”—that it would be perfectly easy to defeat the object of the Bill by making bogus divisions—he did not use the word “bogus,” but that was the meaning—of the land. I agree that it is immoral in itself, and that it is undesirable, that any inducement should be held out to people to create bogus divisions or to put artificial settlements upon the lands. But the first amendment that I wished to move I will now read to the House, because it must commend itself, I think, to any person who is reasonable:—

“Where an owner of land has children born in lawful wedlock, the areas limited by subsections one and two hereof shall be increased as follows: that is to say, of first-class land, an additional area of five hundred acres for each such child; of second-class land, an additional area of one thousand acres for each such child; and of pastoral land, an additional area of two thousand acres for each such child.”

Now, the object of that amendment was this: that when a family is growing up they should

Mr. Bell

be safeguarded against being practically turned off the land which has been made by their—I might almost say “ancestors”—during the past fifty years, and against other persons being put upon the land, whilst the children themselves are not able to reap the benefit of all the love, labour, trouble, and expense of, at any rate, their predecessors during half a century. What is there wrong in that? What is there immoral in making that provision? What, I ask, does it matter to the State if the land is occupied by persons of the same name as those who now occupy it, or by strangers? It seems to me the hardship is very great to the individual, and the profit to the State nothing. And for this reason: We are not preventing the stranger from getting land elsewhere—inasmuch as he can go and get it anywhere—but the feeling of love for home is so strong with families that for many years probably they will not feel the same affection and the same desire to live upon any other piece of land as they did to live upon that which they have themselves occupied. Nor can I admit for an instant that persons coming into this country have any right, because of their having landed in any particular district, to have a piece of land in the district. By all means do I say that they ought to be given every possible opportunity of getting land. But I say that, because a man lands at Oamaru, after coming fifteen thousand miles, he has no special right to get a piece of land within fifteen miles of Oamaru. I cannot see why the spirit of colonisation which caused him to cross the ocean should not cause him to go to any other part of New Zealand in order to get land; and the difficulty of going to any part of New Zealand will not be one-tenth part so great as the difficulties which often young settlers had like myself to undergo in order to get a piece of rough country for themselves. Therefore, it seems to me, there is no reason shown why there should be this special concession made to them. Then, there was another amendment which I moved which seems to me also to be a perfectly reasonable amendment. It was so far reasonable that even the Minister of Lands himself could scarcely say anything against it. I was anxious to provide not for any imaginary case, but for cases that have come under my observation continually—that is, the cases of young men who are anxious to spend the whole of their capital in improving a property, and so have gone into partnership, so that, instead of creating a waste of capital by building two or three sets of houses, sheepyards, barns, stockyards, woolsheds, and so forth, they go into partnership and put up one set of buildings, so that the two or three partners may spend the whole of their remaining capital in improving their land. Surely every person must realise that men in such circumstances are worthy of consideration. They are in no sense enemies of the country, but they are doing their best to make the most profitable use of their capital. In most instances they are young men of scant capital, but full of life and ready for arduous work.

And yet, if two of such join together as partners and take two thousand acres of first-class land in that way, it would be quite possible for the Government to come in and take away from these two partners one-half of their holding—one thousand acres—and to divide it among other people, thereby reducing the original and pioneer owners to a lower area than is allowed under the Bill. Why has there not been some attempt to meet such a case as this? Even in the interests of the Bill, why an effort was not made to meet such a case as this I cannot understand, because it would not have interfered at all with the true spirit and principle of the Bill. The Minister, I know, with a caution which I think extraordinary, imagines there would be attempts to evade the provisions of the Bill, and to create fictitious partnerships; but my honourable friend the member for Wellington City (Mr. Bell) immediately drafted a clause which would crush any attempt to do that; and therefore why the Minister should not have allowed the subject to be carefully considered I really cannot understand. I will just read the clause to the House—and I read it because so many honourable members were unable to stop during the long hours of the debate, and I think it right that they should hear what seems to me to be a very reasonable proposition:—

“When two or more persons, not being incorporated under ‘The Joint-stock Companies Act, 1882,’ are carrying on business as farmers in partnership or co-ownership, each person so carrying on business shall be allowed the same limitations and conditions as prescribed for each person in subsections one and two hereof.”

Then there was another question which seemed to me to merit very much more consideration than was allowed to it—that was, the amendment of the honourable member for Palmerston. I will not read that, because he may himself wish to speak upon the point, but the principle involved in that amendment seems to have been a perfectly right one: the principle involved was that land which in reality is in a high state of cultivation, which is very productive of taxes to the State at the present time, should not be confiscated until various other lands owned by absentees, or not properly cultivated, have been dealt with. Why such a concession as that should not have been met it is difficult for me to understand. The object of the Bill avowedly is to prevent persons holding large areas of land in an uncultivated condition; but when the honourable member for Palmerston comes down with a clause under which the object of the Bill is given effect to the Minister again refuses to take that into consideration. I am quite sorry for the honourable member for Palmerston, because he has not been so many years in the House as myself, and he had a vain hope that he was going to get a chance to-day. When he has been a few more years in the House he will know that when once he gets a cherry he must make one bite of it, and never trust to getting another chance. I wish to compliment the Minister on

having decided to leave the Board as it has been made by the Committee. That was one of the few concessions made, and I am afraid he did not make that very willingly; but, as was pointed out during the course of the debate in Committee by the senior member for Wellington City (Sir R. Stout), it is certainly desirable that the Board should be either one of two things—either a political Board, throwing the whole responsibility upon the Minister; or a Board of business-men who will arrive at their valuation as business-men, entirely independently of political bias. There is a great deal to be said for the Board as brought down by the Minister. I do not wish to criticize that Board unfavourably. At all times I have held the highest opinion of the ability and integrity of the Civil servants of the Crown, and I have no doubt that, though naturally they will have a desire to please the Minister in charge of the department, they will at all times be actuated by a strict sense of duty, and I have no fear of injustice being done by the Board. But I think it would be a desirable thing for the Board to get advice as to the value of land, and I think it should be so laid down in the Bill when it comes back from another place—that the vendor of the land, or, rather, that the man who is having his land taken from him, should be allowed to appoint a valuer, that the Board should appoint a valuer, and that there should be a fair discussion in open Court, or in some way, so that the value of the land should be properly ascertained. There is one clause, though, which I hoped to see amended in Committee, which has come down to us in the state which it was in when it first went into Committee. I allude to clause 14. It seems to me that clause 14 contains a very dangerous principle. It is the clause which provides that the Minister shall be able to spend £250,000 a year in the purchase of land. Now, though the Minister of Lands tells us—and I have no hesitation in believing it—that during his election he did allow the country to know that there would be £250,000 a year spent under this proposed Bill—as he says so, I feel quite sure he did make that statement.

Mr. J. McKENZIE.—I did not say £250,000. I did not mention the amount; I said “a very much larger sum.”

Captain RUSSELL.—But, Sir, the whole of the candidates were too much occupied with their own affairs: at any rate, for my own part, I can say that I never awoke to the assumption that a quarter of a million of money would be allowed to the Minister of Lands annually for the purchase of lands. What we always did understand was that there would be settlement near to the large towns for horticulture, for artisans, and for the settlement of small farmers; but the country can scarcely have been aware that there was to be expended in this day such an enormous sum as is now proposed. But the most serious effect of clause 14 seems to me to be this: that, if the Minister chooses in one year not to purchase land, then instead of the vote lapsing at the end of the year it accumulates.

Mr. J. McKenzie

5.0. Mr. J. McKENZIE.—There may be negotiations going on.

Captain RUSSELL.—It is true there may be negotiations going on, but that could always be provided for by grants from Parliament if desired. There will be an accumulation of money, and pressure may be brought upon the Minister immediately preceding elections, and with three-quarters of a million to spend at a time, however pure the Minister may be, the expenditure of this money may vastly affect the elections. I may not refer to previous debates, but there is this to be said: that on many occasions before this session I have heard the expenditure on the Midland Railway referred to as likely to control the Canterbury vote, and we may hear something of a similar kind again, and, if that is to affect the Canterbury vote, the expenditure of three-quarters of a million is sufficient to bribe any provincial district—aye, every part of New Zealand. Not for one moment would I impute the idea that clause 14 will be used for a purpose of that kind; but there is the fact that there is no annual appropriation, and that there is an accumulation of funds; and this is a power that ought to be placed in no man's hands. Suppose, for an instant, we had the misfortune to have a base and unscrupulous Minister placed in the position of the present Minister of Lands. There is another point I should like to touch on. Not being a sufficiently advanced Government supporter, I was not invited to a caucus that took place upon this Bill; therefore I can only judge by hearsay of what took place. But one of the principles—one ought scarcely to call it a principle, because the principle of this Bill is the compulsory taking of land, and not the tenure under which it is to be held—but I should say that the Minister has been especially anxious that the Bill of this year should be as nearly as possible the Bill of last year, though how it can be called the Bill of last year it is difficult to understand. There is only one principle in it, and that is the principle that was applied in the case of Naboth's vineyard. Jezebel, the wife of Ahab, set covetous eyes upon Naboth's possessions, and his vineyards were taken from him. Only, in the case of private lands in this colony, I trust that when the Minister of Lands has done with this Bill there will be more left to private owners than was the case in the wholesale confiscation of Naboth's possessions under the covetous influences of Jezebel. But the lease in perpetuity was not in the Bill of last year, and it is in this year's Bill; and, therefore, when the present Bill goes to the Legislative Council, the Minister may almost jeopardize his Bill, inasmuch as the principle contained in last year's measure has been distinctly modified. So far as I remember the Bill of last year, land was to be disposed of under the ordinary Land Act of the colony.

Mr. J. McKENZIE.—No; lease in perpetuity.

Captain RUSSELL.—The Bill we passed last year?

Mr. J. MCKENZIE.—Yes.

Captain RUSSELL.—If that is so, the argument would not hold water. But, if lease in perpetuity is the principle of the Bill now, I would ask the Minister, is he going to stand by that principle? Or is that rumour true which is so current throughout the buildings—of course those who were not at the caucus, and did not hear what took place, cannot say whether the rumour is true or not—but I would ask the Minister, is it true that he gave the caucus to understand that as soon as he got this Bill through he would alter the lease in perpetuity?

Mr. J. MCKENZIE.—No.

Captain RUSSELL.—Neither by implication nor direct assurance?

Mr. J. MCKENZIE.—I will tell you all about it presently.

Captain RUSSELL.—I know Rumour is a lying jade; but very often she tells the truth, although she often says what is not the case. At any rate, Sir, common rumour says that there was a promise by the Minister of Lands, or by the Premier—naturally, one cannot say how true it is—but rumour says it was promised that the lease in perpetuity was really not going to stand, but that there is to be a readjustment of valuations at periodical times. We must hope, for the honesty of the Ministers, that they will give a distinct denial to that; for to have forced through an unwilling House the lease in perpetuity with a distinct promise to their supporters that there should be a complete alteration in tenure as soon as the Bill passes is not a desirable thing. For my own part, I voted for the lease in perpetuity—not that I approve of it. I think perpetual lease is worth half a dozen of it. The lease in perpetuity is the bestowal of the estate of the Crown to certain favoured individuals without paying money for it. It is to the fortunate recipient better than freehold, inasmuch as it is giving away the land without being paid for it. The Bill is going to pass; and although, so far as it is possible, in my opinion, to judge, there will not result the good from it the Minister believes,—though I believe most thoroughly that it will check colonisation rather than increase it, as I believe that taking land and enabling people to settle close to the towns before the colony is fully occupied is not in the interests of New Zealand,—yet I should wish it to be understood that to imagine that the large landholder is in any way inimical to or disapproves of the spread of settlement is to make a very great mistake. I think it is a very great mistake. The true principle in a new country seems to me to be this: to spread colonisation throughout the whole country; and, once having done that, then comes the time for the consideration of negotiations for the acquisition of land. But until you have settled the whole country, and failed by negotiations in the open market to get land for settlement, it is wrong to insist upon the compulsory taking of land, and it is wrong to take highly-cultivated land whilst you can get land which is not cultivated.

The foremost desire in every man's mind is to place people on the land. Members on both sides of the House are directly interested in the settlement of the country. In this country primogeniture does not exist; the law of entail does not apply; there is no desire to establish a large landed proprietary, or to create a territorial aristocracy. The result of this Bill, I honestly believe, will be to check the interest which the father has in protecting the interests of its own family, and the consequence will be rather to check the true colonisation of the colony than to advance it.

Mr. DUNCAN.—In the half-hour speech we have just listened to from the leader of the Opposition the honourable gentleman has been very moderate. All we gather from it is that he is opposed to this Bill, that he is opposed to its principles, and has been opposed to every line and to every section of the Bill. And, now it is going to its third reading, the whole opposition they have been able to raise to the Bill amounts to about four or five clauses. The honourable gentleman seems to think that a man is not allowed five hundred acres for each of his family. Now, Sir, I think that is very easily got over under the Bill. I believe, if he has a family even of twelve, he can apportion five hundred acres to each under Crown grant to-morrow, and if he does that I take it there is no Government that can take it away from him under this Bill. But to allow him of his own sweet will to hold one large property against all outsiders is very unfair.

An Hon. MEMBER.—No.

Mr. DUNCAN.—I think so; because, as I have stated, you have an opportunity to give to every child you have got five hundred acres or even a thousand acres, and, I take it, that cannot be taken away from them.

Mr. T. MACKENZIE.—They can squander it.

Mr. DUNCAN.—That may be. They may squander the property if left to them after death; but they are not so likely to squander it while the parents are living. Then, with regard to partners. That seemed to be held out as his next point. He said it was a wrong thing not to allow two partners to hold the maximum amount allowed under this Bill. Now, the very same law applied to these. Why should not each partner have a Crown grant for the half of the whole owned by the two partners? It is the easiest thing in the world to do that. They are no more likely to squander it than if they held the whole quantity between them under one grant. So that neither of these objections is fatal. In fact, as far as I can see, they are immaterial, and not worth considering at all. The honourable gentleman's next objection was to the amount of money. He objects to that—he objects to the amount of money which the Minister of Lands asks for to work this Bill. Now, in my opinion, the amount is not high enough, because, when it is distributed in the various districts where it is required to be spent, it will be a very small sum for each indeed. And when we take into consideration the fact that

any owner of a large property may, at his option, make the Government take the whole of his property if they want a part, it will be almost impossible to touch the land with this limit of money. Therefore it is a blunder to have the amount fixed so low. I have now in my mind's eye several properties that could be settled to advantage, and yet not a single acre of that land will be operated on if this money-limit is maintained, because there is such a latitude that, the moment you go for a portion, the owner will come down with a claim that you must take the whole. The money will not be sufficient to take the whole property, and that land will be left alone, and the very parties will escape who should not; and therefore the people requiring land where these large properties are situated will not, in my opinion, have their requirements satisfied inside this money-limit. Therefore I would advise the Government, if possible, to have this amended at the first opportunity, because they will find this will bar them. I believe the honourable member for Hawke's Bay—who rose out of his seat, and who does not wish to hear my remarks or criticisms—if any one went to get his property to-morrow, would say, "You must take the lot, or have none of it."

An Hon. MEMBER.—Quite right.

Mr. DUNCAN.—The honourable gentleman says, "Quite right." There is where this money-limit will come in to defeat the Bill altogether. Now, Sir, that is one defect in the Bill that I hold will be fatal to the working of it. I am one of those people who are thankful for small mercies. I should be thankful to get the Bill passed supposing there was not a shilling attached to it at present, because I have no doubt the good sense of the country will show that a reasonable amendment of the Bill is necessary, and I believe that when the Bill comes again before Parliament the money-limit will be abolished. Now, the next point touched upon was the principle of the lease in perpetuity, and I may say that I am one of those who believed in this measure, and one of those who recommended and fought for it from its very inception. The first Liberal measures that came down to this House were those that the Hon. Mr. Rolleston brought down in 1882. He would have been defeated by his own party on his Land Bill had it not been for myself and three other gentlemen. Two of them are in the House at present—Major Steward and the Minister of Lands—and the third gentleman is dead. I went to Mr. Rolleston, as spokesman for the four of us, and I told him quietly if a division were taken he would find us in his lobby. He knew his party had the design of killing the Bill, and that they would not allow it to pass; and therefore that is the way that Land Act about which we hear so much now from honourable gentlemen on the other side of this House was passed. It was really we who were the means of passing it. We passed it in that form, containing the perpetual lease. Now, I was in favour of the lease as provided under that Act, but I found this: that before we had it

in operation for any length of time those who took advantage of the clause wanted the right to purchase. The moment they got liberty to purchase, then the land could be accumulated, and large estates could be created under that measure;—and large estates were created under that measure. It was the great source of dummymism, and opened the door to that objectionable mode of accumulating large estates. Now, Sir, I find that this is the only way in which the country can have the land settled in the way decided by this House, and under which it cannot be aggregated into large estates. Therefore, I say, the tenure provided for in this Bill is the best we possibly can devise, and for this reason: It allows a man with moderate means to take up a portion of land, and to make a comfortable living for himself without too much expenditure of money; whereas, if he paid cash down, he would either be driven to the money-lender or he would spend all his spare money, and have nothing left with which to make improvements on the land, and therefore he would not be able to put stock on the land, and get the necessary utensils for working it to the best possible advantage. Now, under this lease in perpetuity his money and whatever he has got will be put into the land, and he will know exactly what he can do with it, and he will be able to make a better start for himself than he would be able to do under any other tenure. I hold that it is a very good thing for this reason: The lease in perpetuity provided for in the Bill will hold for all time to come, and will produce a certain income from the land, which, I think, it is very desirable that any colony should have always in view: because we must understand that the education of the people has to be provided for, that old age has to be provided for, and also hospitals and charitable aid, and therefore, I say, there ought to be secured for all time some income derivable yearly from the land in order to meet these charges that we expect to have to meet. To my thinking, it is quite different altogether from selling the land, because it gives the landowner, or the man in occupation, just as good a tenure as if he had purchased, and, at the same time, the State does not absolutely part with the land. Supposing it were allowed to be purchased outright, we should squander some of the money derived from the sale on some of the railways we talk about, connecting one small district with another, and affording no commensurate return for the outlay. Under the lease in perpetuity you do not lose the property at all; it belongs to the public, and from it the State obtains a rental annually: so that, as I say, it is the best form of settlement I know of. Not only that, but it is the most popular. If you were to put the land up to-morrow and give the people the choice of occupation, you would find that you would have ten occupations under this tenure for every one you obtained under any other tenure that has been mentioned; and therefore this is a very great thing indeed. I do not intend to speak at any length on the subject upon the third reading of the Bill,

Mr. Duncan

but I thought it was necessary just to touch on two or three of the objections which have been raised by the leader of the Opposition. The honourable gentleman stated in his closing remarks that the law of primogeniture was abolished in this country; but that was the very first thing he wished to continue under this first clause—namely, to provide for his family—and therefore I am very glad it has been abolished, and I hope it will never be re-suscitated in any colony in the world. I am very glad the Bill has arrived at this stage, and I thank the Minister of Lands for taking the action he has done this evening in going to the third reading without recommitment, because I feel, if it were committed, the experience we have had in the past will teach us it might be in Committee for perhaps all the night; and therefore the best plan has been adopted—namely, to let the Bill go to the Upper House; and any amendments that may be found necessary can be put in there. I will not occupy the time of the House any longer. I trust the Bill will be read a third time, and that we shall get it passed into law, even in the form it is in at present.

Mr. G. J. SMITH.—I take the opportunity afforded by the motion for the third reading of the Bill to make some remarks upon it, if the House will bear with me for a few moments, suffering, as I am, from a severe cold. I must express my regret that this Bill has been treated as a party question. The Bill itself is one of the most important that can come before the House, and I regret exceedingly that, with such a large party supporting the proposal to repurchase land for settlement purposes, the Government have thought it necessary, in their wisdom, to make the Bill a party one. Now, Sir, that is the more to be regretted when we find that almost all, if not all, the members of the Liberal party are in favour of the principle of compulsory repurchase which is in the Bill. But, Sir, there are certain clauses in the Bill that there is a difference of opinion upon, and upon those clauses I think it would have been only fair for the Government to allow individual members to vote as they choose. Now, when this Bill was before the House on the second reading, the debate was somewhat restricted on one night, at all events, owing to the lateness of the hour to which it was carried on, and consequently I did not occupy much time; but after the second reading was carried there was a very important meeting held in this building—in fact, a caucus of the Liberal party. I do not wish to say anything against that meeting; it was the first I have had the honour of attending; it is the first time we have been consulted: but I regret exceedingly that at that meeting the members of the Liberal party had to practically agree to sink their own convictions on certain clauses of the Bill and agree to support the Bill as introduced by the Minister.

An Hon. MEMBER.—A few of them.

Mr. G. J. SMITH.—Yes, a few of them. We were promised at that time that on a future

occasion the House should have an opportunity of debating an abstract motion on the question of the perpetual lease as against the lease in perpetuity. Well, Sir, all I can say is that it seems to me a farce that the House, in its wisdom, should pass a Bill providing for the lease in perpetuity, and then discuss an abstract motion, possibly doing away with it, which could have no effect. The motion itself would be absolutely valueless as long as this Bill is put on the statute-book, and if I were not so much in favour of the main principle of the Bill I should vote against the third reading. But, recognising as I do that the main principle of the Bill is the compulsory repurchase of land for settlement purposes, I feel bound to support the third reading. Now, there are two or three clauses I should like to refer to for a moment. In the first place, the Bill provides, in clause 4, for the Minister to direct the Board to negotiate for the purchase of land for settlement purposes. In Committee the honourable member for Riccarton moved an addition to that clause, providing for the purchase of land near the centres of population for settlement purposes. The Minister contends that that is already provided for under the Bill. I regret that, personally, I cannot agree with him in that contention. At any rate, if he had inserted this particular clause it would only have made that clearer which is at present doubtful. As against that, we had the promise of the Minister in Committee that he would bear this in mind, and that at a very early period we might hope to have some of these settlements in existence near the centres of population. With that promise I am forced to be content, although I should have preferred to see it expressed in the Act. Then, again, we come to the question over which the fight raged—that is, as to whether the tenure of the land was to be lease in perpetuity or perpetual lease. Sir, I am strongly in favour of the perpetual lease with revaluation. To my way of thinking that is the only reasonable tenure that can be introduced into such a Bill as this. We are told that if we interfere with the fixity of tenure we shall create a dissatisfied tenantry, and we are told that we must have this eternal lease. I contend, however, that all that this eternal lease will do could be done equally well by the perpetual lease—that is, the lease for a term of years with the right of revaluation of the rental. That practically gives the same fixity of tenure that the lease in perpetuity gives, provided the tenant agrees to pay the increased rent.

An Hon. MEMBER.—Oh!

Mr. G. J. SMITH.—Honourable members are a little hasty. The revaluation may mean a reduction in the rent; and I contend that that principle is only fair—fair to the tenant and fair to the State. Are we to say that the State is to be the proprietor of certain lands, and to claim that the people we place upon them have no right to the revaluation of the rental, and that we shall refuse to reduce it? I contend, if the value of a property sinks below a certain

level, that, both in the interest of the colony and in the interest of settlement, the State ought to be prepared to reduce the rent; and I also contend, if there is an aggregation of population through the expenditure of public moneys, and the lands in various parts of the colony become increasingly valuable, then, as a result, the State has a right to the increased rental value of the property. I cannot understand honourable gentlemen opposing this. Coming as it does before a House composed very largely of Liberal members—members who are pledged to Liberal reform, members who believe that the State has a right to this unearned increment—I cannot understand the opposition that has been shown to this particular clause. I can only say it seems to me the opposition has arisen from the fact that the Bill has been made a party question, and I hold that it is necessary that some reform of the system of making measures like this party questions ought to be brought about at as early a period as possible.

7.30. An honourable member has informed me that I committed an error in referring to a caucus of the Liberal party. I wish to say this: that if I committed an error I was not aware that any such rule existed; further, that some member of that caucus on the day on which it was held supplied a *précis* of what was done to a newspaper; and, as that was, I suppose, from an authoritative source, I have very good authority for the course I took. But, even were it not strictly in accordance with etiquette, I say that the Liberal party now—and I believe the whole of the members of this House are, more or less, in sympathy with liberal measures—is strong enough to apply the Premier's own maxim,—

Perish policy and cunning!
Perish all that fears the light!
Whether winning, whether losing,
Trust in God and do the right.

If we go in for pure administration,—if we go in for what we believe to be generally for the benefit of the colony,—there is no need to fear any criticism. With regard to the purchase of land near towns I wish to read a portion of a letter I have received with reference to some land near the City of Christchurch. Referring to Mr. McKenzie's speech, my correspondent says,—

"I see from to-day's papers that the Hon. J. McKenzie, speaking on the Land for Settlements Bill in Committee, said that the Government had tried to buy land near Christchurch, and had failed because the high price asked would make the rent about £3 per acre. I have an acquaintance who has over 400 acres good land within six miles of the city, and if the Government take the lot they can have it for something less than £20 per acre. It is suitable for subdivision, and a great portion of it is equal to any land in or about the city."

As a great part of the land about Christchurch is uniformly good, this land ought to be fairly cheap at the price, and I hope that when the Minister of Lands comes to put into operation the clauses of this Act that give him power to acquire land near towns he will re-

member this offer. In speaking of the necessity for these settlements near towns, it struck me that I had possibly not made myself quite clear to honourable members. I wish it to be understood that I do not mean settlements for men given up wholly to small dairying or anything of that sort. As I understand the desire in Christchurch, it is this: There are a number of artisans and workmen who are, unfortunately, owing to slackness of trade and other causes, employed only half their time. If these men could put in their spare time on a section of land within easy distance of town they could make homes for themselves, the cost of living to them would be reduced, and I believe that, having this occupation, they would be able to make a certain amount out of it, and it would tend very largely to limit the "unemployed" difficulty in the city. There is one other point to which I wish to refer—that is, with reference to the area proposed to be occupied by this Bill. The Act of last year limited the area of sections of good land to 320 acres. Under the present Bill, as I read it, there is practically no limitation, except the limitation that may be fixed by the Minister of Lands for the time being. In my opinion, it would be a gross injustice to take land from one settler for the purpose of giving it in large blocks to another. I say, in my opinion, the real purpose of this Bill is to provide for close settlement; and, this being so, I hope that the Minister will continue—and I give him every credit for the care he has already evinced—I hope he will continue the system of restricting the area of the sections. But we must remember there may be a time when the present Minister of Lands will give way to a successor. If we then get a Minister who will faithfully execute the Land for Settlements Act we shall be fortunate. But it may not be so, and in an Act of this sort giving large powers we should make every provision to see that no injustice is done. I had intended at one time to move that the Bill be recommitted, for the purpose of allowing honourable members to consider their vote on the question of the lease in perpetuity and the perpetual lease; but, after due consideration, I have come to the conclusion that it would not be fair to ask honourable members to stultify themselves by voting in the opposite direction to a vote already given; and therefore, although I am sorry that honourable members came to the conclusion they did and voted as they did, I consider it better to leave the vote undisturbed. I have only once more to regret that this measure so far as the tenure of the land is concerned is not in accord with what I believe to be the opinions of the great majority of the Liberal party. However, honourable members have given their votes, and I should not be justified, as I say, in wasting time or obstructing the passage of the Bill. I believe, if the Bill itself is administered fairly and faithfully, notwithstanding the special defect just pointed out it will tend in great measure to relieve the pressure in the towns. This being so I shall support its third reading, and hope to see it carried.

Mr. G. J. Smith

Sir R. STOUT.—I wish to say one or two words about this Bill, because I do not think even the members of the House thoroughly realise what far-reaching effects it may have. First, I understood the Minister of Lands to say that several amendments proposed to be considered by him will be inserted in the Bill in another place. One of those which he suggests shall be put in in another place I do not think can be so put in, because it interferes with the appropriation clause, and therefore that clause will have to go unamended unless brought down by message from the Governor. I shall say nothing more about the amendments proposed to be inserted in another place; only I maintain that it is a pity that when the Bill leaves this House it will not be in a perfect state. What does this Bill mean? First, I point out that it is a borrowing Bill. It means that the colony is to borrow a million and a quarter in five years; and the object of borrowing this million and a quarter is, as has been stated by the Treasurer, to settle twelve hundred and fifty people on the land. That is the number of settlers the Colonial Treasurer states will be settled on the land: so that for each settler who is to go on the land we are to give an advance of £1,000—that is, the colony is to borrow £1,000 to lend to each new settler to settle on the land. It seems to me a very high price to pay, especially considering the Crown lands we have, and the Native lands we could obtain on lease, even without purchase. The next point I wish to refer to is this: that, practically, all freehold over a thousand acres is abolished—that is, all freehold land now is held subject to the right of purchase by the Crown. It is what might be termed a conditional freehold—not absolute freehold—and therefore those who assert, as has been asserted this afternoon, that the eternal lease gives security of tenure could not imagine that it is any more secure than the freehold tenure of the past. It will be less secure; and therefore the argument in favour of the eternal lease—that it will encourage people to settle on the soil—is of little value considering what we have done with the freehold. Who would have imagined twenty years ago that freehold tenure in this colony would be practically abolished in New Zealand? We have made great strides, and I do not see, when we come to speak of freehold, that we shall not take a step further and reintroduce the perpetual lease. The next matter is that this is not a Bill for close settlement. There are, no doubt, provisions in the Bill that may enable it to be used for that purpose, but it does not necessarily mean that: it practically means a Bill to produce settlement at the will of the Ministry of the day, and it may be in blocks up to five thousand acres of pastoral land. This cannot be called close settlement. It is not a Bill for close settlement; it is a Bill to take private lands, to be disposed of on this eternal lease, perhaps in large blocks; and this is not the sort of Bill we should pass at all. The next point I have to note—and I am passing rapidly over these points—is that the

Bill provides for the eternal lease; and I say that this is entirely opposed to all advanced Liberalism. What may be termed the keynote of advanced Liberalism is that the State has the right not only to control the actual occupation of land, but to obtain what is termed the unearned increase in the value of the land. That is one of the planks of the advanced Liberal platform all over the world, and this plank is entirely ignored in the Bill. It is not only ignored, but I ask the House to notice the Minister of Lands says that it is not one of the planks of the platform of the present Government policy, and that he will not allow the House to disturb the eternal lease. That is the policy of the present Government—to have the eternal lease. We cannot therefore have a Fair Rent Bill or revaluations of land.

Mr. J. MCKENZIE.—We are going to bring down a Fair Rent Bill.

Sir R. STOUT.—As applicable to these leases?

Mr. J. MCKENZIE.—To every one.

Sir R. STOUT.—Then, what does the Minister mean by making it a part of his policy that is not to be altered? His party is called together and not allowed to alter the Bill in this particular. What does this mean? The honourable gentleman stated, in moving the third reading, that there were some points of his policy which he could not allow the House to alter, and this was one. Is he to pass a Bill with this unalterable part of his policy to-day, and next week or next year to bring in something directly opposed to it? What sort of a policy is that? The honourable gentleman says, "where necessary." The honourable gentleman means, by this, wherever a sufficient number of electors require him to do so. That is not a policy at all. We ought to have some political creed by which we are bound, and I submit the political creed of the advanced Liberalism of the day is that the State has a right to obtain the unearned increase in the value of the land. This Bill denies this. And it is part of the Government policy to deny it, because the Minister has laid down that the eternal lease was one of the points of the policy in this Bill. Then, the next thing I object to is the form in which the Board of Land Purchase Commissioners is constituted. There are two kinds of Board possible: one that might be termed a judicial Board, and the other such as we have in this Bill. In this Bill we have a Board which is entirely under the Minister of the day—is responsible to the Minister of the day, and to no one else. There is, therefore, political control. The whole framework of the Bill is political control. For instance, the Board cannot move, in the first instance, of its own motion. It has to be practically set to work by the Minister of the day. As I have said, the whole framework of the measure is thoroughly political, and I submit that ought not to be so. If we have not a Board of a judicial character, we shall have grave changes made against the Minister of the day, whoever he may be: in fact, to use a phrase we have all heard before, we may say to the Minister of

Lands, whoever he may be, "Be thou as chaste as ice, as pure as snow, thou shalt not escape calumny." I do not care how the Minister administers this Bill, he will find one district will say he has chosen the land of a man from political friendship or enmity. He will find that it will be continually said against him, if, for example, a man's property is overburdened with debt, that he has purchased the property to aid him. Then, the Minister may come down and demand that a man shall sell his land or it will be taken compulsorily. In that case it will be at once charged against Ministers that this is done out of pure political enmity. No Minister can escape these charges if you allow the framework of the Bill to be wholly political. It is wholly political; there is no judicial element in it. It is all very well to say there are the Surveyor-General, the Commissioner of Taxes, and the Commissioner of Crown Lands; but they are all political officers—they all hold their office at the will of the Minister of the day; and we know how men are removed from office in the Government, not because of any wrong actions they may have done, not because they have performed their work badly, but simply because they do not hold the political opinions of the Ministry of the day. That has occurred in many instances, and it will be liable to occur in the future: in fact, it is well known that a great number of the Civil servants are in continual dread of removal or probable dismissal. I have said that I have these objections to the Bill. There are others, which might be termed small objections, but I am not going to deal with these. I may say that I supported the honourable member for Hawke's Bay in two amendments which he wished to make. One amendment was that a man should be allowed to have a certain area of land for his sons, if he was training them to be farmers. I do not think there is anything wrong in that. The other amendment was that if two men are in *bond fide* partnership they may be allowed to have land up to the limit of 2,000 acres, and are not limited to 1,000 acres. I do not think there is anything unfair in that. Therefore I supported the honourable gentleman in that direction. There are good things in the Bill. The fact that it will encourage close settlement is, I think, a good one, and I hope it will be beneficial to the country. These are the things we see, but there are, no doubt, things we do not see. I think it may not have the good effect that many expect. I think it is exceedingly to be regretted that this Bill cannot be termed what we thought it was to be—namely, a Bill to help those who are landless, to help the poor, to encourage small settlement, and help those who have small means to settle upon the land. But the aim of this Bill is much wider: it is, practically, to give farms to farmers, and not farms to landless people. In this respect I think the Bill has gone on wrong lines. It is entirely a different Bill from that proposed by the former Minister of Lands. I again repeat that there are many things in it which may not lead to the beneficial effect

Sir R. Stout

which we hoped. There is no doubt it will discourage the improvement of land. If a man holds a freehold of over a thousand acres it may be said to discourage him. He will be continually living in dread of his land being taken from him, or of having the area so reduced that he will not have the pleasure which he now has, perhaps, in his estate. That, I think, is a bad thing. I do not say that the State has not a right even to keep him in this feeling of dread if it is necessary for the close settlement of the people; but I again repeat that it ought only to have been resorted to in a grave emergency, and under conditions which do not exist at the present time in New Zealand. I think, in this Bill, we ought only to have dealt with those districts which are congested, and which have large estates near them. We might have taken some of those large estates and settled small farmers in these congested districts on the land. If we had used the Bill in that direction it could have been done with less money than is proposed to be taken here, and we need not have gone to the extent of pledging the credit of the colony to a million and a quarter. We have, however, taken a new departure. It is borrowing, as I have said, to the extent of a million and a quarter. This is not merely for landless people. We are to out up large estates in order to, practically, find large farms for farmers; and the limit, assuming that the Land Act is to be incorporated under this Bill, is 5,000 acres of pastoral land. That cannot be said to be a small farm. I regret the Minister did not accept the suggestions made by me in this respect in Committee. I, for one, will not vote against the Bill. I voted for the second reading. But this I will say: that it will not have the effect that is thought by many honourable members. Many persons will come to see that it would be far better to have adopted a more moderate Bill—a Bill with far less borrowing powers, with far less areas; and especially, I believe, a majority of this House will yet see that the House ought not to have insisted upon the lease in perpetuity instead of the perpetual lease.

Mr. PIRANI.—Before the mover replies I have a word to say on this Bill. I do not think the Minister can accuse me of obstructing the Bill, as I did not speak on the second reading, and the whole time which I occupied in Committee did not cover more than fifteen minutes. Still, I think I must take this opportunity of saying that I am considerably disappointed with the manner in which the Minister of Lands has treated the amendments postponed from last Saturday morning. It seems to me that he treats this House somewhat as one treats a child whom one cannot trust with a fragile plaything for fear of breaking it. He seems to me to be afraid to allow the Bill to be committed again for fear of its being so altered in shape that he might not know it. I do not know that there is any need for such a fear, and I think far more time has been wasted in this direction, and will be wasted, than would have been occupied in considering the

amendments in Committee. Anyhow, I am thankful for one hint which the Minister has given me, and that is with reference to the amendments which he proposes to get made in the Bill in another place. I shall imitate his example, and see if the clause which I propose to put in the Bill cannot also be added to the Bill in another place, in common with the honourable gentleman's own amendments; and therefore, for the purpose of giving publicity to this clause, I shall read it now. It reads as follows:—

"It shall be the duty of the Board, where there are several estates in the same locality suitable for the purposes specified in section four, to take them in the following order:—

"(1.) Unimproved estates:

"(2.) Estates partially improved, or capable of such further improvement as will greatly increase their producing capacity:

"(3.) Estates the owners whereof have not resided in the colony within three years of the date of the proposed compulsory taking of such estates:

"(4.) Highly-improved estates.

And so long as there shall be estates of the first, second, and third class in the same part of the colony suitable for the purposes specified in section four, land of the fourth class shall not be compulsorily taken."

I merely wish to add to that that I have supported this measure in the House and in Committee. My faith in the Minister is, at any rate, equal to that of the honourable gentleman's own colleagues, for his own colleagues have voted against him in Committee when I have supported him. Therefore he can no longer say, as he said the other night, that I am not a supporter of his—that I only support the measures which he proposes whenever they suit my purpose. I think I have shown that I am as faithful a follower of his as any of his colleagues: and that is saying a great deal under the present system of party government.

Mr. BELL.—I intend to move that this Bill be recommitted. As I read this Bill it is open to the Minister to pledge the whole of the five years' instalments in the first year; and, if this Bill passes as I read it, the Minister might, within a month after the passing of this Act, pledge the colony to the whole amount of one and a quarter millions. No proper opportunity was given to the House to consider the wording of this Bill. No honourable member can say—and certainly the honourable gentleman cannot—that I have in any way obstructed the passing of the Bill. So far from that, I supported it on the second reading. I never spoke except to call attention to what I considered to be defects. On one occasion I drafted a clause for the honourable gentleman, and on another occasion I pointed out to the Colonial Treasurer a mistake which would have prevented his converting the debentures which he issued. I did try to do my duty as a member of this House in making the measure which we are about to pass as clear in its language as, no doubt, it is clear in its intentions.

8.0. But I submit to the House that we have utterly failed in providing any limit. I, myself, hold it to be unconstitutional that we should appropriate moneys in advance year after year. I am perfectly aware that it has been done in a number of cases—in the Naval Act for instance—but for purposes of this kind I believe it to be without precedent. But that is not my point. My point is this: I believe the Act is so worded as to place us absolutely at the mercy of the Minister. The reason why this Bill has not been properly criticized is this: We were brought to a late hour on Saturday morning by arguments addressed from the Government side of the House, and by a very considerable amount of argument adduced by the Colonial Treasurer, who spoke four times, occupying his full ten minutes each time, and I venture to say that that honourable gentleman can put more into his ten minutes than any other member in the House. What he said required and deserved consideration. Sir, the debate on the principle of the Bill took us to a late hour on Saturday morning—a quarter past three—and I then, desiring honestly to discuss the amendment which was moved by the honourable member for Palmerston, asked that we should have further time given us to consider the amendment proposed. That was refused. Now, I say that there was no obstruction—there was no reason for forcing us to discuss and consider an amendment of that gravity and importance at that hour of the morning, and I resisted. Sir, that is only an instance of what has been going on since real business has been done during this session; and I desire to protest against it. I believe that the result of our being forced into a discussion of the amendment proposed by the senior member for Wellington City at so late an hour, without having an opportunity of considering it, has been to lead us into grave danger, and I, for my part, shall divide the House upon the present motion. I desire, therefore, to move the recommitment of sections 10, 11, and 14. My honourable friend near me suggests that I should add 19, but I do not desire to add that. I have opposed the lease in perpetuity,—I spoke against it on the second reading of the Bill,—but it was properly considered in Committee, and was carried by a large majority, and so I do not want to recommit the Bill for the reconsideration of that matter. What I am asking the House to do is to recommit the Bill for the reconsideration of a very grave blunder which does, in my judgment, exist in the Bill as presented to us for its third reading.

Mr. SEDDON.—Sir, it scarcely requires me, I think, to tell honourable members that the Government cannot accept the amendments which the honourable gentleman has mentioned, and which he contemplates putting in the clauses that he proposes should be recommitment. The question raised by the proposed amendment was fully discussed in Committee.

An Hon. MEMBER.—No, no!

Mr. SEDDON.—I say the question of the whole amount involved in this Bill was very

fully discussed. It was discussed whether or not the amount should be £1,250,000, taking the time-limit mentioned in the Bill—at so much yearly. I say that has been discussed to such an extent that there is no doubt honourable members' minds are fully made up on it.

Mr. BELL.—Allow me to explain. Though I expressed my opinion upon that point, I did not move to recommit upon it, but upon the ground before mentioned—that it gives the Minister power to pledge the whole £1,250,000 in one year.

Mr. SEDDON.—Sir, the honourable member knows very well that the Minister is responsible to this House, and that he is responsible to the people of New Zealand, and it is simply begging the question to ask to recommit it on the ground stated; but there is no doubt whatever that a section of members in this House care not by what means or how they succeed if they can destroy this Bill, and prevent the people of this country getting the advantages which they must inevitably have if this Bill becomes law. I would warn members of this House who feel strongly that there should be perpetual lease instead of lease in perpetuity not to risk the loss of what is accomplished in this Bill, and what we have desired and fought for years to accomplish. Do not let what is now within our grasp be taken away from us, as it will be if this Bill is allowed to be interfered with in the way the honourable gentleman indicates by his amendment. We have gained that which has been before the people of this country, and which, I say, has been indorsed by the people. That being the case, let us hold fast to what we have got. It is our bounden duty to do that, and not to be led away by the special pleadings which honourable members have just listened to from the honourable gentleman. Sir, I say that if you look at the part of New Zealand where this Bill would most operate—in the South Island more particularly—what is the amount asked for? Why, in one year, if full justice were done, the total amount would be absorbed. I have heard honourable members from the Canterbury District state that they felt sure the £250,000 would not be sufficient for Canterbury; I heard the honourable member for Hawke's Bay state that the £250,000 would not be sufficient for Hawke's Bay; I heard it said that it would not be sufficient for North Canterbury; and I have heard it said that the whole might be required for the Auckland Provincial District. Well, I think that if you allocate the one million and a quarter to the different parts of New Zealand it will not be at all too much, and I feel sure that in five years it will all be granted.

Sir R. STOUT.—That is not the point.

Mr. SEDDON.—Sir, the point is, any means that can possibly delay the measure and get it back into Committee, and then we shall have the same thing over again that we have had. There is no Bill that I know of that has ever been before the House so often, or been so much discussed, that has gone through Committee

so slightly altered as this one. Sir, touching the arguments,—as this is the only opportunity I shall have, I ask, what are the arguments against this—

Sir R. STOUT.—I rise to a point of order. I understand that under new Standing Order 159 the honourable member must be confined to the amendment moved by the honourable member for Wellington City—namely, the recommitment of clauses 10, 11, and 14.

Mr. SPEAKER.—I have already explained to the House—and the House seemed to approve of my view—that the parliamentary practice has been to allow the original motion and a proposed amendment to be discussed simultaneously, and that there is really a flaw in new Standing Order No. 159. Were I to carry it out literally I should not allow a member in charge of a Bill who made a motion concerning it, to speak on an amendment which might be a fatal amendment to the measure. I shall adhere to the old practice of allowing a member to speak on the amendment and the original question simultaneously, and will not debar members from speaking to an amendment even though they have spoken to the main question prior to the amendment being proposed.

Mr. SEDDON.—What, Sir, are the real arguments against the Bill? Take the honourable member for Hawke's Bay: In discussing this, what did he state? He said he had moved several amendments, and that the Committee had refused to grant him those amendments. Sir, what was his first amendment? The question of increasing the area: it was that when a man had a family he should, for each member of his family, set apart a portion of his estate, and that that should be calculated in the area allowed to be under the exemption. Sir, what will that mean? It will mean that a man with a large family will keep his estate intact as long as he can, but the moment an attempt is made to subdivide it or take it for settlement purposes, then he will claim for the whole of his family. I ask, if he wants to see his sons and daughters settled on the land, why not divide his estate with his family, and allow them to be doing as they ought to be doing? If he wishes that, he should do it at once. That is the answer to the amendment the honourable gentleman made so much about. Then, we come to the next question, with regard to partnership. I say the same thing would apply here. There would be partnerships entered into for the purpose of evading the law. That, of course, in legislation we ought to provide against. The matter was fairly argued out, and there was an overwhelming majority against the honourable gentleman in that proposal. I am rather surprised at the honourable the senior member for Wellington City (Sir R. Stout). He has complained with regard to the small grazing-runs. For that purpose, 5,000 acres may be held by one person, and he objects to that; but, in the same breath, he favours the amendment of the honourable member for Hawke's Bay, which would give five thou-

Mr. Seddon

sand, six thousand, or seven thousand acres of first-class land to the owner of one estate. I say the two things are entirely inconsistent, and would not, if permitted, be conducive to the public welfare. Amendments have been inserted which, I think, were reasonable amendments. There may be some portion of an estate that the owner is desirous of insisting shall be taken; and he has the power of insisting that the whole estate shall be taken: there may be some portion of it fit for nothing else than small grazing-runs; and I say that, unless you let that land again in such a way that those who take it may be able to live upon it, it would be simply folly on our part if we were to allow it to be dealt with otherwise—it would absolutely make the Bill unworkable; and this provision was put in by the Minister of Lands to meet what was a reasonable contention from the other side. Now, having accepted that, it is urged as a reason against the passing of the Bill. I am rather amused when I come to consider the position taken up by the senior member for Wellington City and by the honourable member for Hawke's Bay. In the one case, the honourable member for Hawke's Bay was alarmed because, he said, the Bill practically meant the destruction of the freehold, and he claimed that the freehold was the salvation of the settler, and that it was the thing that maintained him in his position. The honourable member for Wellington City has told the House that he is against the freehold—he has told the House that he is a land-nationaliser; and, strange to say! he thought on this point that the Bill was to perpetuate the freehold. Well, we find on this question that both honourable gentlemen were arguing against the Bill, and now they both come to the same point: and I cannot, myself, reconcile the matter. Advanced Liberalism means, says the honourable member for Wellington City, the abolition of the freehold. Well, if that is the policy of advanced Liberalism, and it means, in other words, confiscation, I may say at once that I am not in favour of it. I am not in favour of confiscation; and I will undertake to say that, if the people of New Zealand were sounded upon the matter, we should find an overwhelming majority of the people of this colony who would not listen to any such thing. It is statements of that kind that create fear in regard to the passing of such measures as this. But where a fair offer is given to the owner of land—where the value of the land is assessed by a Court of competent jurisdiction, presided over by a Judge of the Supreme Court, with arbitrators appointed, one by the owner of the land and one by the Crown, with the Judge sitting between the two as umpire—I say, where fair-play is given to the owner of the land, and he gets a fair value for the land when it is proposed to be taken for close-settlement purposes, then there should be no fear, no grievance, and no dread in the mind of the owner of the land. We have been careful in this measure to safeguard the owner, and—I believe the Board here proposed is not so good as the Board originally

proposed, but a majority of the House has said that there shall not be local representation on the Board, and also that the member for the district shall not be on it, and that the County Chairman, who should know something about land-values, shall not be on the Board. The honourable gentleman said it would be inconsistent to say that the member for the district should not be on the Board and the County Chairman should be retained, and that both must go or both must be reinstated in the Bill. That is the position taken up, and I say at once that the argument that the present Board is a political Board is entirely wrong. It is an official Board—that is the proper term to give it—and I might point out that the first Bill brought down dealing with this question contained provision for an official Board. I say more, and I say you cannot ignore the Commissioner of Lands, or the Surveyor-General, and it would be unfair to ignore the Commissioner of Taxes. The whole three of these officers are the best men we could possibly get to deal with lands under this Bill, and to say that the Commissioner of Taxes, the Surveyor-General, and the Commissioner of Lands are creatures to act at the dictation of the Ministry, or that they will give increased values for lands, or will say that land is wanted for settlement purposes when land is not wanted—I say statements of that kind made in this House are the means of taking away from deserving officers the good characters that they bear. It is a slander, which I resent, and I say that we have no officers capable of such things in the public service of New Zealand. Speaking of the Civil Service of this colony, it has been said in the course of this debate, on more than one or two occasions, that the Civil servants are all in dread of the present Government. It has been said that they have not souls which they can call their own. I say that is a calumny on the Civil servants of this colony, and it is undeserved and absolutely unjust. When on the other side of the House I was one of those who insisted on reducing the estimates: and in dealing with the Civil servants of this colony I would not permit such statements to be made, either publicly or privately, as I have heard during the debate on this Bill. Such statements are undeserved and unmerited, and I say that we have a Service that we owe and all ought to be proud of. Ministers are not always the same—they come and go; but members forget altogether that there is a Civil Service Appeal Board above all Ministers, and I say that since the present Government came into office there have been only one or two cases in which Civil servants have appealed. And I say, with some degree of confidence, that there has been no previous Government which, having brought down its estimates time after time, session after session, and, having stated "these are fair salaries to pay," have passed their estimates unaltered. Under a former Government the salaries of the Civil servants were cut down and mangled in Committee, and they did not know what position they were in.

Mr. McGUIRE rose to a point of order.

Was the honourable gentleman discussing the Bill?

Mr. SPEAKER said the subject of the Civil Service had been brought into the debate by previous speakers, and the honourable gentleman was entitled to refer to it.

Mr. SEDDON.—It was alleged that there would be favouritism. We were told that if the members of the Board happened to recommend a certain piece of land or a certain estate they would have to fix the price to the satisfaction of the Minister, and that they would practically be punished if they did not do so. The honourable member who made that statement has certainly not read the Bill at all. Under the Bill the Minister will be approached by the persons concerned, in the first instance, if they desire to sell, voluntarily. There is not a member in this House but knows where the districts are that are suffering from want of a closer settlement. He is responsible, and should be responsible, to the House, and it would never do for a member to be bringing up in this House what has been said against the Railway Commissioners. It has been urged time after time by the honourable member for Wellington City (Sir R. Stout) that the Government should take direct control of those railways, and that they should not be left to irresponsible persons. There are fifteen millions of money invested in our railways, and year after year there is an expenditure of one-quarter of a million in salaries alone; and the honourable gentleman said that, if it is legitimate in respect to this vast estate of fifteen millions of money, in which four thousand men are employed, that the management should be made non-political, then, in dealing with this question, involving an amount of one and a quarter millions for the purchase of land for settlement, the management should be made non-political, and we ought to have a judicial Board, and one kept altogether clear of Ministers. I say the two arguments of the honourable gentleman are entirely inconsistent, and that the responsibility must come upon the Minister. The responsibility will then be upon honourable members themselves. In this case we are dealing with Ministers who are responsible to the people, and who belong to the people; and to say that the expending of money in the purchase of land for settlement should be taken away from all political control, and from the Parliament of New Zealand, is saying that which will not bear investigation. Then, with regard to the charge of favouritism—that certain estates will be bought to the detriment of others: Under the present law, where the land to be taken is voluntarily sold, there may be something in that argument; but where it is compulsorily taken it cannot be said that any man in particular is favoured. Where a man does not want to sell his estate, and the Minister insists upon taking a portion of it, that argument will not hold water for one moment, for the reason that the Minister is responsible to the people and to members of this House. We are told that charges will be made from time to time, and that, no matter who

Mr. McGuire

may be the Minister on these benches, charges will be levelled at him for having favoured individuals. Why, Sir, my experience has been, since I entered politics, that, time after time and session after session, we cannot please those on that side of the House. When we were on that side of the House we were hard to please, and I say that criticism of the administration of a Government is a necessity, no matter what Government is upon these benches. But criticism is one thing, and a charge of corruption is another. We have had in this colony very few charges—only one or two, I think—of corruption against Ministers, and I would say that the Minister who would do his duty fearlessly cannot afford to risk anything as a representative of the people. But I will undertake to say that no man on these benches could afford to do what has been suggested will be done in regard to the purchase of land under this Bill. Then, we have been

8.30. told that this would not permit close settlement—that it would only permit settlement by farmers. Well, Sir, I do not know that there is anything wrong in that. I have always understood that the true settlement of our “unemployed” question is—honourable gentlemen here, on the floor of this House, unhesitatingly say that the only true solution of our great “unemployed” difficulty is—to get the people on the land. Now, to place the people on lands the areas of which are too small to enable them to live will only aggravate, not relieve, the difficulty. This Bill is the machinery for the acquiring of land, but the land is to be dealt with under the Land Act. Now, under the Land Act the land can be cut up into the smallest sections, from a quarter-acre to the extent allowed by the Act. That is a matter of administration. There may be places in close proximity to towns where lands may be cut up into ten-, fifteen-, or twenty-acre sections. There may be holdings which will promote not only settlement by farmers, but will also promote close settlement by the amount of labour introduced. I will conclude on the question of borrowing. I say it is not borrowing at all, in the sense represented. It is simply this: an exchange. It is true that in five years a million and a quarter may be expended, but we get in lieu of that a valuable estate—the land itself. And, Sir, it is not at all borrowing such as it has been stated on the floor of this House to be. Under these circumstances, taking the two things together, I say the people of this colony will be wealthier than before when this money has been spent in the purchase of this land. Leave the question, I say, of the lease in perpetuity or the perpetual lease. Let us have the principle laid down of the compulsory taking of land for settlement purposes. That gained, then, hereafter, when the mind of the people and the will of the people is made known in this House, will be the time for dealing with the question as to how you will settle the people upon the land. In the meantime, let us stand by this Bill.

Mr. EARNshaw.—The Premier, of course, if he does not want to keep to a point, can

always use a large volume of words to cover up what is his real meaning. Now, an amendment has been moved by the honourable member for Wellington City. I think it is a very proper amendment, and it is quite true the point raised was not raised during the whole of the debate in Committee. The only time the financial points were dealt with was when I moved that the vote of a million and a quarter be reduced by half a million, and, afterwards, that it be reduced by a quarter of a million, and at the end that this measure should only be in force for two years and end on the 31st March, 1896. At no time was it clearly pointed out, although I doubt not that in the minds of many honourable gentlemen it was realised, as it was by myself, that the Minister could mortgage the whole of this money during the present year. There is no doubt that, while he may not be able and cannot this year pay more than £250,000 in the year, yet, if he does not spend the full amount this year, the £250,000 of any succeeding year can be added to by the amount unexpended: thus he can pledge New Zealand to a million and a quarter on the purchase of land in this first year. That, no doubt, can be done, and to give this power to the Minister is pernicious. Therefore I shall have great pleasure in supporting the honourable member for Wellington City. Now, the Premier was good enough to tell us that the Ministry is responsible to the country. I demur to that. The Ministry are responsible to this House, and this House is responsible to the country; and it is a peculiar position that the Government have usurped. They think that they are the Parliament, and that whatever they say must be done, and will be indorsed by the people. Now, Sir, he also regretted that the constitution of the Board was altered. Well, I am very glad that the Board has been altered; and I think if the honourable gentleman will only consider the enormous number of Government supporters who voted against members of Parliament being on that Board—and the voting was very close—it cannot be said it was the Opposition on the one side and the Government on the other. The two sides are very equally balanced with regard to that opposition, and I think the honourable gentleman will not see his way, of course, to introduce a member of Parliament on the Board in another place. Now, I think this Board is the best Board you can get, if you are going to have a non-political Board. I am sure these three gentlemen are more qualified and will act, in regard to land-purchases, better than if saddled with any member of this House, and there is no doubt about it that every member of this House who would sit upon the Board would be placed in a very invidious position. It came out clearly in the debate that a million and a quarter is certainly not enough if we are to adopt the views of honourable members with regard to the land surrounding their districts. Member after member got up and said that this million and a quarter should be spent in his district. They said that there were large estates surrounding

the centre of their district on which this money could be spent for settlement. And here is where the danger comes in: We have emerged from £50,000 to a gambling speculation of a million and a quarter, and I say that that power is too much to put into this Minister's hands. I think that future Ministries will be as pure as the present Ministry is, or as past Ministries have been. We always take it for granted that they will be pure. But the power of spending or of pledging the colony to spend £250,000 a year, for a term of five years, is a power which, I say, should never be put into the hands of any Minister, and upon this House rests the responsibility for transactions that, I say, have got no end, because the argument of the Minister of Lands is, that he knows the sum at his disposal is not large enough, because of the magnitude of the estates he has to deal with. What does that mean? It means that if he is to go on with the purchase of these large estates it cannot end at this million and a quarter, because, I say, several large transactions would absorb the whole of this money. Does this House, then, think that other districts in which large estates are waiting to be broken up and purchased will not more intensely demand that they shall be purchased? This is only the beginning of the thing, and, as has been well said on the floor of this House, it is not so much the "seen" as the "unseen" that should make every member pause before he gives his vote on the final reading of this Bill. I have opposed the borrowing proposals in this Bill, and I shall oppose them to the end. I say they are altogether against the principles on which the present party came into power. There was not a Liberal member returned to this House who put before his constituents the purchase of land to the extent of a million and a quarter in five years; and this is only one part of the whole programme of land-purchase, because the support of northern members of this House to this Bill is contingent on the Native-land Purchase Bill which is coming down, and which will undoubtedly carry with it similar purchasing proposals.

An Hon. MEMBER.—Hear, hear!

Mr. EARNSHAW.—"Hear, hear," says the honourable gentleman. There is a clear indication of how the cat jumps in respect of this land-purchasing: they are determined that the State shall purchase large blocks of Native land in the North Island. Then, in connection with land-purchase must come the other vote for the roading and bridging of these districts. Now, I hope the Liberal party will pause before they give the Minister this power, and will say, "We will limit him to an annual appropriation, and he shall only have £250,000." That is five times more than he asked for last year, when he thought £50,000 sufficient for this purpose: and, as a matter of fact, he only spent £39,000. Under the £50,000 appropriation he could this year have entered upon the purchase of land to the extent of £111,000, because he had £11,000 in hand on the 31st March, 1894, and, with the £50,000 for this year—

1894-95—he could have entered into liabilities and could have appropriated the vote for the year ending the 31st March next—1895-96. That would have given him £111,000 to deal with under the present Act in the purchase of land; and, unless we are going in for a huge land-gambling scheme in New Zealand, that amount should be quite sufficient for even the large views the honourable gentleman has—and I give him every credit for the views he holds in regard to the settlement of the land. I also look with suspicion upon the character of settlement that he proposes. I think it is very significant when he refused the amendment on clause 4 proposed by the honourable member for Riccarton, with regard to the lands contiguous to the cities, to make an avenue for the working-men in the towns. If the honourable gentleman was sincere in this he would have no need to fear its going into the Bill, because it would have been only an indication to the Board that this was one part of the scheme. But that he has opposed it to the extent of his power leads me to the conclusion that he does not desire to give an outlet to those men who have given the Liberal party the power in this House to carry their Liberal measures through; because it is in the centres of New Zealand that the feeling has originated and been the key by which the honourable gentleman and his colleagues in office have, in the past, got power sufficient to carry the Liberal party on to those benches: and the Minister ought to give to those who are, unfortunately, only intermittently in work an outlet by which they and their families might go on an acre or two in suburban districts. However, it does appear to me his main end is not to deal with this class of men at all, but with farmers' sons who want 500 acres of good land, or grazing-runs, to settle on: these are the people the honourable gentleman wants to find an outlet for. He is more careful of country settlers and their families than he is to deal with what the Premier just talked about when he said the great thing to do was to get the unemployed upon the land. If the Government are sincere at all about getting the unemployed upon the lands of the colony, they have any amount of Crown lands, and it would cost them infinitely less to put these men upon it. They could spend the money on road-making, and thus find money and employment for these men for the first two or three years. They could fell twenty acres of bush land, put up houses to live in, and fence; and that would truly be solving the case of the unemployed, and of close settlement. As an illustration, I say that the Government could deal more effectually with the unemployed in Dunedin by settling them down in Catlin's Bush than by settling them on open lands, because they must have money with which to stock open lands right away; while on bush lands they could work them for far less money, there would be more work available for them, and it would not cost the State so much. If the Government mean to deal with the unemployed in the centres of

Mr. Earnshaw

population by buying high-priced land and putting them on it—men who have no money and who have no credit—it will end in failure. I ask, how can they go on these lands? Even if the average size of the holdings should be only ten acres, it is impossible. It is not possible for these people to pay the rents that will be charged them; and, therefore, I say the Government have not grasped what is absolutely the essential point of the question—the settling of poor people on the lands of the colony. I have very great pleasure in supporting the honourable member for Wellington City (Mr. Bell). This measure, as he explained, gives the Minister the absolute power to pledge the colony this year to five years' land-purchases. There can be no doubt at all about it. The only thing about it is that an average payment of only £250,000 can be made annually.

Mr. G. W. RUSSELL.—Having supported the second reading of the Bill, and voted with the Government on almost every division that took place in Committee, excepting those on amendments I moved myself, I feel bound to support the third reading. I wish to be consistent with the course I took in the House in regard to this matter, and should be very sorry at this juncture, however strongly I feel in regard to the amendments I moved, to do anything in the way of asking for a recommitment of the Bill. The Bill embodies the great principle of compulsory expropriation, and therefore should receive, and has received, I believe, the support of every member of the Liberal party in this House. I think I am correct in saying that that principle is now virtually accepted by both sides of the House, and it is only in the case of isolated members even of the Opposition that the principle of the right of the State to resume lands for settlement is seriously contested. Now, a great deal has been said in the course of the evening as regards the constitution of the Board. I did my best to carry out the views expressed in my second-reading speech, by opposing the inclusion of the member for the district, and also the inclusion of the County Chairman. I opposed the inclusion of the member for the district because it would mean the importing of an entirely new element into the duties and responsibilities of members of Parliament. I opposed the inclusion of the County Chairman because the County Chairman is almost invariably the representative of the large landowners, and therefore a member of the Conservative party. Consequently, I think the House has done right in removing both of these gentlemen from the proposed Board; and, if there be another alteration I should like to see made in the Bill, it would be for the Minister to revert to the old Board, and include the District Land Registrar. Of all the officials who could be placed on the Board, the District Land Registrar is, perhaps, the one most eminently fitted for the position. He sees the whole of the mortgages that go through from time to time, and he has, as well, a very accurate idea of land-values; and

I would suggest to the Minister that, if he would bring his Bill entirely into line with last year's measure by including the District Land Registrar, he would take away some of the objections that may possibly be raised in another place to the present constitution of the proposed Board. I cannot refrain from expressing my regret that the Minister used his majority—a majority that had been brought into the lobby by the hobnailed boots at the caucus—for the purpose of defeating the amendment which I proposed in clause 4. The first subsection of clause 4 states that the object of the measure is, first of all, for the purpose of providing land for settlement under the Land Acts. Now, when I proposed to add a subclause after that, to the effect that it should also be for the acquisition of land suitable for homesteads contiguous to boroughs or town districts, the Minister of Education and the junior member for Christchurch City (Mr. Collins) contested the necessity of including these words, alleging that all I proposed was already included in subsection (1)—namely, “providing land for settlement.” But my argument is this: If that subclause as drafted covers the whole ground, why does the Minister take new ground in subclauses (2), (3), and (4)? Why does he go on to say, “for the acquisition of sites for homesteads for neighbouring high-lying pastoral land”? Is not that included in the words “land for settlement” in the preceding subclause? Why does he in subclause (3) again go on to say, “for acquiring low-lying land necessary for the working of neighbouring high pastoral land”? Is not that included in the three words “land for settlement”? The same thing applies to the 4th subclause. I maintain, Sir, that, if the Minister was correct in saying there was no need for inserting my amendment,—that one of the objects of the Bill was to provide for the acquisition of land suitable for homesteads contiguous to boroughs or town districts,—the very same argument which he applied against adding these words applies equally against including subclauses (2), (3), and (4) of section 4 of the Bill. Now, let me say I have no objection whatever to the proposal that there shall be a quarter of a million spent every year in connection with the repurchase of lands. If we are going to enter upon a general policy of purchasing land for settlement throughout the colony, then a quarter of a million spread over New Zealand is a comparatively small amount; and as for the point raised by the honourable member for Wellington City (Mr. Bell), I will say, although he may be right from a strictly legal interpretation of the clause, yet I shall feel it to be my duty to vote against his amendment, in order to support the general principle of the Bill, and to prevent any further delay in its becoming law. While saying this I cannot refrain from expressing my regret that the Minister refused to accept my proposal that there should be an increase in the rent sufficient to provide a 1-per-cent. sinking fund. I should like to draw attention to the fact

that in his own Land for Settlements Bill of 1891—a Bill which, as I pointed out before, was brought down with the late Mr. Ballance's approval, and which, therefore, may be understood to express and contain his opinions—this principle of 1 per cent. for sinking fund was distinctly set out; and I should like to read, with the permission of the House, clause 17 of that Bill. It says,—

“The rental of land acquired under this Act shall be at the rate of five per centum for interest and one per centum per annum for sinking fund on the capital value of the land, and such capital value shall be fixed at a rate sufficient to cover the cost of original acquisition of the land, together with the cost of survey and road-making thereon, and the estimated cost of administration.”

Sir, the object of the 1 per cent. for a sinking fund was to provide a gradually growing and increasing fund, so that the colony should not for ever be required to borrow: and that that can only be done by having a sinking fund in connection with these land-purchases. I affirm it is reasonable that those men who are to get a lease in perpetuity, under which they acquire, virtually, the fee-simple of the land, and take a mortgage from the State to the full amount of the security at the low rate of 5 per cent., should pay 1 per cent. more in order to create a sinking fund, so that other lands may be repurchased in the same way, and that the benefits which they themselves have received may be extended to other parts of the colony, and to other settlers. Now I come to the point on which I had my little contest with the Government—that is, the question of the lease in perpetuity *versus* the perpetual lease. How a Liberal Government could adopt the stand towards my amendment which the present Government adopted I really cannot understand. It surprises me; and, of course, being a new member of the House, I can only suppose it is one of those things one has to learn—namely, how political parties change their views and opinions, and depart from their original principles and policy. The Premier the other evening stated that as public opinion grew regarding this question the Government would be prepared to alter their position regarding the lease in perpetuity or the perpetual lease. What has been the position for the last three years? Three years ago, in this House, a Bill was brought in providing for perpetual leases, and therefore for revaluation, and also providing for the area being limited to 320 acres. The Government proposals have been growing, but they have not been growing in the direction of Liberalism,—rather in the direction of Conservatism. We now have a Bill brought in by them which grants leases in perpetuity—which grants for 999 years the occupation and the use of land at a rental of 5 per cent. on the value to-day; and we have a Bill which virtually imposes no restriction as to area, excepting the limitation of the Minister, so far as the regulations are concerned. Compare this Bill with the one we had when Mr. Ballance was here—a Bill which

was to provide for close settlement, and which was intended to carry out the village-settlement homestead scheme which he made his specialty—a scheme which secured the admiration of the country, and which did more to settle the “unemployed” difficulty in 1886–87 than any other proposal which has been made. I say that the proposals of that measure have been departed from by the Government. As stated to the House to-night, this is hardly a Bill which will provide land for the landless and which will put poor people on the land, but a Bill which is intended to provide fairly comfortable farmers and their sons with land that has been improved, and which will afford them a better means of making a living. I say that, so far as the Minister has undertaken that task, he has undertaken one that the House and the country will regret, and, if this measure is to be made the success which will gain for the Minister that reward of admiration and respect which he desires, he must come back to the first principles of his measure, and, instead of making the primary object of the Bill the acquisition of estates like the Cheviot, he must use the means at his disposal to settle the agricultural labourers, the small farmers’ sons, and people of that class, who are unable at the present time to obtain land. It has been stated that under this measure the average cost of each farm would be £1,000. That, I think, was the working-out of the figures which the Colonial Treasurer gave the House the other night. I find that is just the average of the Cheviot Estate. The Cheviot Estate cost about £268,000, and, I think, on the whole of the estate there are only about 260 holdings. If that is correct, then the statement of the Colonial Treasurer, that this Bill is intended to provide farms each worth £1,000, indicates clearly the direction in which the Government is going. This is a huge blunder on the part of the Government. It is possible to place 250 people on the land to make homes for themselves without going to an expenditure of £250,000. It is possible to put people on the lands of the colony in much smaller holdings than are apparently contemplated by the Colonial Treasurer, or as worked out by the Minister in connection with Cheviot; and I sincerely hope that will be done. But now I come to the question upon which the eternal *versus* the perpetual lease must hang, and that is the question of the unearned increment. When I was arguing this question the other night in Committee the Minister assured me that minerals are reserved to the Crown by section 121 of the Land Act. Now, I am quite willing at all times to accept the Minister’s statements as to matters of fact, but I trust he will excuse me if I prefer to take the opinion of honourable gentlemen like the two members for Wellington City (Sir R. Stout and Mr. Bell) as being greater authorities on matters relating to law. These honourable gentlemen stated clearly in the House their opinion that under section 121 of the Land Act minerals are not reserved, and I accept their statement so far as that is concerned. And I would also point

out to the Minister that, in the conditions of the leases in the Momohaki Village Settlement, as published in the *Gazette* of February, 1894, which leases he signed only a few months ago, there is no reservation for minerals. Now let me come back to the illustration with regard to Cheviot, which I was dealing with the other night when the Minister contradicted me as to my reading of the law. I was pointing out the possibility in that district of a coalfield being discovered, and around which a huge city might grow up.

9.0. That is not impossible, if we are going to let the land for 999 years. What was Melbourne sixty years ago? Why, land was sold for £47 per acre which is now worth £470,000. And, Sir, I should like to ask, are we to suppose that no other cities are to grow up in New Zealand? Are we to suppose that no other goldfields will be discovered round which settlements may be raised up like Hokitika, Greymouth, and Westport? What is the value of a few of the towns in New Zealand? I find that the unimproved value of the City of Christchurch, which comprises 1,000 acres, is £1,820,000, or, say, £1,820 per acre. Take Palmerston North, which twenty years ago was nothing but a bush district: that place has in the course of twenty years sprung to importance, and is now the most important inland town in the North Island. The borough has an area of 4,000 acres, and yet every acre has an unimproved value of £80, while if the area were limited like that of Wellington it would probably be twice that amount. As far as Wellington is concerned, I may state that the value of this city per acre is £3,400, and the value of Woodville is £46 per acre. Hawera, which was sold only about eighteen years ago, is worth £76 per acre; Pitone, which has only been settled for a few years, and covers a small area less than 1,000 acres, is worth £150 per acre; Caversham is worth £200, and Invercargill £646, per acre. These are facts which indicate to honourable members the growth there is of what may be termed the unearned increment. And let me point out to the Government that there is comparatively small growth in connection with the unearned increment in the country districts: it is in the cities where the growth is high, and it is the high growth of value in future cities that the Radical party in this House are so anxious to secure. Now, I come to the matter of the area. I cannot but express my disappointment that the Minister has insisted all through on retaining the power to lease such large areas under this Bill. It would have been a great deal better had he dropped out altogether the question of purchasing land suitable for small grazing-runs, and applied himself solely to the closer class of settlement represented by rural and suburban lands. However, after all, it may be said the question will resolve itself to a great extent into a question of administration; and if the Government carry out the Bill in its integrity, if the Minister fulfils the pledge given—that he will devote himself to the creation of village settlements and small-farm holdings through-

Mr. G. W. Russell

out the colony—I, for one, shall not be inclined to complain when we meet next year. Now, I should like to say a few words regarding the caucus that was held, and I wish to express my disappointment that I had not the opportunity of being there.

An Hon. MEMBER.—Why?

Mr. G. W. RUSSELL.—I cannot tell the honourable gentleman. I had no notice given me that a caucus was to be held. I strolled into the Buildings to attend to my duties in the House, and I found a number of gentlemen filing down from a room where it had been held, and I could only imagine why no notice had been sent me. I should not presume to say—being a young member of the House—that the Government did not want me there, but it is a very remarkable circumstance that the first caucus of the party held this session was called at half an hour's notice, and, though my address was very easily known, and though the caucus was held for the consideration of my proposed amendments to the Bill, nobody took the trouble to send me a card to tell me of such a meeting. That may evidence great sagacity and astuteness on the part of the Whips, but it is not the kind of thing to attach a loyal member to his party. As to what took place at the caucus, I can only say the Government made a very great mistake in allying themselves to the freehold party in this House. The Premier took credit for standing up to-night, I understood, in defence of the freehold. Sir, when I saw the spectacle of the leader of the Opposition (Captain Russell) and a number of his party filing into the Government lobby the other evening for the purpose of voting against my amendment affirming the principle that the unearned increment belongs to the people, which principle was in the Bill which Mr. Ballance authorised and the present Minister of Lands brought down three years ago—when I saw that spectacle I could not help saying,—

Oh for the touch of a vanished hand
And the sound of a voice that is still!

If the Liberalism of the Government is to be Liberalism that means backing down on principle for the purpose of conciliating the Conservative section of their party their days will be numbered. They have forced me into the position of standing out against them regarding this matter. I have taken the responsibility of my opinions, and stood by those opinions right through; but what have they done to a number of honourable gentlemen equally pledged with myself? They have laid upon them certain party obligations which they had no right to lay upon them; they have held up to them the possibility of the Opposition combining with the Radical section of their party and defeating the Government; they have held up the possibility of the Conservative party in the Legislative Council throwing out the Bill because it contained a Liberal principle. I say a Liberal Government should stand by Liberal principles, and not sacrifice them for the purpose of conciliating a Conservative minority of their own party, or a Con-

servative majority of the Upper House. I picture to myself what would happen in the House and the country if this very Conservative body—the Upper House—that we hear so much about, were to put in revaluations? What would the Government do? Would they accept them, or would they drop the Bill and go to the country and hold up the Legislative Council as the cause of all the trouble? Would they dare to do so on the question of the eternal lease? I tell them if they did they might get the support of the Conservative section of the community, but they would be beaten by their own party. And I should like to ask, what would be the position of those honourable members who were returned by the Knights of Labour and other Liberal associations pledged up to the hilt for revaluation? They may go back and say they were frightened by the Government—that they were told the Bill might be dropped—that they were promised the possibility of discussing an abstract motion. But how could they reconcile their past professions on the platform with their action in this matter? I leave them to judge. All I can say is, had the Radical section who were returned pledged to the principle of revaluation stood firm, the Government must have given way, and the principle of revaluation would have been inserted in this Bill. It is the fault of the Liberals, who backed down on their principles on this occasion, that again three years hence we shall have to go and fight the battle out. I say, without fear of contradiction, that there is no chance, after the vote that was given the other night, of revaluation being secured in this Parliament. Honourable members may hug the delusion to themselves that they will be able to vote on an abstract principle. What is an abstract principle? What is the worth of it? Absolutely nothing; it is not worth the paper on which it is printed. I say, so far as this House is concerned, we are not here to discuss abstract principles; we are here as legislators to do our duty—to deal with these things as they arise; and it was the duty of the Liberal party to settle this question of revaluation when it arose, and to allow the decision on this Bill to be an indication to the Government what they should do in bringing down a land measure which should include that principle. I am much disappointed in connection with the matters I have spoken on—as regards the area, and the eternal lease, and the refusal of the Government to affirm the principle of the object of the Bill being to purchase lands near cities. But having, as I said, stood by the Bill in its essential principle, as affirming the right of the State to resume land for settlement, I am prepared to accept it, although it is defective, and I trust the Government will so administer it as to make it a benefit to the country.

Mr. COLLINS.—Sir, the honourable gentleman who has just sat down has made one or two observations that call for some little comment. He said the Minister of Lands carried his measure through the House by a vote of the majority, brought into line by the hobnailed

boots at a caucus meeting. I, as one who voted with the Government on nearly every occasion during the passage of the measure, resent that statement, that the party were brought into line by the hobnailed boots of the Minister at a caucus meeting. The honourable gentleman grew indignant; he affirmed that, although a young member of the House, he failed to understand why he received no intimation of that meeting. He said, "Why did the Government wish to exclude him? Were they afraid of him?" But I received no intimation of that caucus meeting until the meeting was over; I received no card.

An Hon. MEMBER.—You were away.

Mr. COLLINS.—I was here in time to have been at that meeting before it broke up, but I had no intimation of it. I knew nothing of the holding of the meeting; and I was one of the majority who voted with the Government, not because of any caucus meeting, but because I conscientiously thought my vote was necessary in that direction. I agree with so much of what the honourable gentleman said that I regret having to differ from him in the slightest degree. I agree with his splendid illustration taken from Melbourne and other thickly-populated centres, and I think his logic was sound, and his conclusions were properly deduced, and were absolutely sound; and I think the enthusiasm manifested by him not only justifiable, but in every sense commendable. More than that, I fully agree with him that the State has a right to take that unearned increment of which we have heard so much. I maintain that that unearned increment ought not to find its way into the pockets of any private individual. But I am under the impression that the honourable gentleman did not seize an opportune time to raise this contention. He brought the name of the late Mr. Ballance into the discussion. I am absolutely certain that the name of that honourable gentleman is sufficient guarantee for the action we have taken. If there was one point upon which that honourable gentleman was sound, it was on the question of land-settlement—the question of settling the people on the land—and I undertake to say we should dishonour his memory if we allowed a measure for the promotion of land-settlement to be jeopardized by insisting upon the inclusion of revaluation, or the obtaining of the unearned increment. All this can be dealt with as it ought to be. I am very anxious to obtain the unearned increment for the State, but I am anxious to obtain what can be obtained at once—land-settlement—and I should hesitate to jeopardize the possibility of that by asking for something that we are not likely to get, and that the temper of this House has proved we cannot get at present. I should be willing to fight by the side of the honourable gentleman for all time to come so long as I was in the House on behalf of obtaining the unearned increment, but I am not going to be so foolish as to lose the settlement of the land while asking for it. So much for the unearned increment. A great deal has been said during

Mr. Collins

the discussion as to the early settlers, and how much injustice has been done to those who leased the land in the past, and brought it up to its present state of cultivation. I am willing to give the early settlers every credit for their courage; I am quite willing to give them every credit for their industry; I am quite willing to admit that they have enriched the country by their perseverance, their energy, and their industry; but what does it all imply? The time has come when we must recognise the fact that they have been very well paid for their courage and for their energy, and that they cannot be allowed to monopolize the land of this country to the prejudice of the continuously increasing population. Then, again, objection has been raised that provision has not been made for close settlement near towns; and the honourable gentleman who has just sat down has again drawn attention to the fact that I maintained that the acquisition of town lands was provided for; and he quotes only clause 4. Now, the particular clauses to which I drew the attention of the House were not only clause 4, but also clause 19, which makes it perfectly clear that land is to be obtained in the neighbourhood of towns. And what a necessary thing this is! I would ask honourable members to remember this: that we should not be acting in the interests of true Liberalism in jeopardizing a Bill which would make it possible to settle people in the vicinity of towns. We have here an opportunity of at once limiting the process of overcrowding which is now so constantly and continuously taking place. I should not be far wrong if I said that the process of centralisation was going on in greater proportion to population here than it is in Great Britain. Now, this process of overcrowding is already bearing its prejudicial results, and brings with it intense competition. It is the cause very largely of the "unemployed" difficulty which from time to time crops up in our midst. It means a lower vitality; it means a lower type of life; and if we can take one little step in the direction of reducing that competition and of alleviating the distress of the unemployed—if we can take one little step to raise that vitality and give a higher tone to life—I say we are bound to do it, and we ought not to jeopardize the possibility of doing it by adding something to this Bill which can be obtained in another manner. The progress of our towns depends upon the productive power of the country. And the more we can increase the productive power of the country by settlement the more we shall increase the productive power and prosperity of the towns. The two should go hand in hand. We have taken great strides in this country—our people have been educated as the people have been educated in no other land. Education has raised their aspirations—it has increased their conception of what an ideal life should be; and, having increased that conception of what an ideal life should be, we can now endeavour to gratify that conception by endeavouring to bring about that ideal life, and we can only do this by a process of land-

settlement which this Bill will enable us to carry out. It has been said that this Bill means borrowing a million and a quarter pounds sterling in five years. Well, Sir, if it be borrowed for this purpose it will be well borrowed, and should every penny of the amount be spent for this purpose it will be well spent. I would ask, how could we use a million and a quarter of money in a better way than in settling the people on the land? Then, the Minister of Lands was asked whether he would alter this Bill so as to provide for revaluation—when he admits that he is willing to bring down a Bill to deal with revaluation afterwards. I think the reason is obvious. The honourable gentleman will not alter the Bill in order to provide for revaluation because he is so set upon passing this Bill for the purposes of settlement that he is not willing to jeopardize the Bill in any way; and I must congratulate the Minister of Lands on the stand he has taken. Another honourable gentleman—my colleague the member for Christchurch City—said he was sorry the Government had made this matter a party question. I can assure that honourable gentleman that, so far as this matter is concerned, I have not voted as a party man. I hope I have voted having the entire interests of the country at heart. I hope I have voted conscientiously in what I believe to be the interests of the greater portion of this community. Then, the honourable member for Wellington City asserted that there was any amount of Crown land available for settlement. Well, we know there is any amount of Crown land available for settlement, but we know that to send people to that land is almost as bad as transportation. It is practically sending them into exile; and I say, if land can be obtained by the processes indicated in this Bill, and which will place our people at once and for all time in a position to maintain themselves, if not in luxury, at least in a moderate degree of comfort, this Bill is, I think, in every sense justified. I do not wish to take up the time further on this particular debate, but I would remind honourable members that when this measure was before the House for its second reading it became the fashion for every speaker to complete his address with a few lines of poetry. There are one or two lines with which I shall conclude, and which run something like this:—

So all intolerable wrong shall fade;
No brother shall his brother's rights invade,
But all shall champion all;
Then men shall bear, with an unconquered will
And iron heart, the inevitable ill,—
O'er pain, wrong, passion, death, victorious still,
And calm, though suns should fall.

I want to see that time when each shall champion the cause of the other, when one man shall not infringe upon the rights of another. The rights of men have been infringed by land-monopoly, and the rights can only be obtained for the people by securing to the people that necessary heritage the land, from which may be derived the means of healthful living and subsistence.

Mr. T. MACKENZIE.—A lecture very well

worked up I call it, Sir, delivered with a considerable amount of sound and fury, which signified little. It comes as from a man who feels that he ought to excuse himself for a wrong course of action. I had no intention of speaking on this measure to-night; but when I hear an honourable gentleman who has succeeded in securing a position in this House on one of the planks which he is not now supporting, but who shows that he is wrestling with his own conscience and is endeavouring to justify his conduct before his constituents, it requires some plain speaking. The honourable gentleman stated that he would stand shoulder to shoulder with the honourable member for Riccarton in insisting upon the unearned increment going into the coffers of the State; yet, although in the next breath he declares that he is prepared to do that whenever the occasion comes in this House, when the opportunity does arrive of showing whether his principles are sound or the reverse he quietly comes in and deprives the State of the unearned increment he says it is justly entitled to. And then, as if to throw dust in the eyes of his constituents, he says he voted in the direction he did because he did not wish to imperil the Bill by inserting a clause which might have imperilled it. Sir, that clause never could have imperilled it. It was distinctly understood by the people who placed that honourable gentleman in this House that that clause, if it passed through this House, would also pass the Upper Chamber. There can be no doubt about that. If the unearned increment of these properties, which are to be acquired out of the public fund of this colony, is not to go into the coffers of the State, then why talk about those early settlers whose unearned increment ought not to go into their own pockets? I say the position taken up by the honourable member is one which he will not be able to explain to his constituents; and, if he satisfies them, I say they are not an intelligent body of men.

An Hon. MEMBER.—What about the women?

Mr. T. MACKENZIE.—An honourable member asks me, "What about the women?" I think, if the women of the colony had as strong an opinion on the question of land-settlement as they have on the temperance question, he would be utterly unable to satisfy them—that is to say, if they advocated the unearned increment going to the State. Of course, I hold the reverse opinion, but I am showing the honourable member's inconsistency. He also talks about the rights of men, and about the terrible cruelty of the exile that would be passed upon the denizens of the cities if they were compelled to go out on to the waste lands of the country in order to make homes for themselves. What have the early settlers of this country undergone? Did not they undergo hardships in the early days of settlement? Compare them with what settlers have to go through now. I say, before private properties are acquired in this colony, we ought first of all to settle our Native lands and our unoccupied Crown lands, and there is nothing that would

more greatly interfere with the settlement of our unoccupied Crown lands than what the Government measure now before us is intended to do—namely, to acquire properties near the large centres of population. In the district from which I come there are thousands of acres of land of an excellent quality; but can you get settlers to go and take up those lands as they did two years ago? No; they are not going to apply for the land. Two years ago there was a demand far in excess of the land available for settlement; and in the case of surveys, although they were carried on two years ago at a much greater rate than now, yet we now find there are more sections surveyed than there are applicants for. This is simply because the people think they will be able to acquire land near the large centres of population. We heard a great deal from the honourable gentleman about the overcrowding of cities, and the efforts that ought to be made in improving the health and the tone of these cities. Sir, what has been the cry of the party of which that honourable gentleman is a member? For a system of protection, in order that they might overcrowd the cities and keep them up at the expense of the country. It seems to me that this protective policy, which that honourable gentleman and his friends insist on placing on the shoulders of the agriculturists of this country, had that one object in view—namely, to locate the people in the large centres of population, and discourage the best settlement of the country. Then, we have this cry about the unearned increment. We heard the honourable member for Riccarton talking about the value of city land, and of the value of land in Palmerston North; but when I asked the honourable gentleman last night what price was paid for that land he did not reply. He said it was now worth £80 an acre. I suppose he was not aware that more than £80 an acre was paid for that land; and if it is now worth only £80 an acre, and if the Government had the use of that money for twenty years, it follows that the Government is the gainer. Then, let us inquire about some of these town properties that were opened by the Government. There is a town in my own district—

An Hon. MEMBER.—Clutha?

Mr. T. MACKENZIE.—Yes, Sir—a very excellent constituency. The Hon. the Minister of Lands will remember that there is a little town in that district called Port Molyneux: I believe the Government received over £100 an acre for some of the sections there twenty or thirty years ago; and now there is not a man in New Zealand who would give more than agricultural land value for it. If you are going to place in the coffers of the colony the unearned increment, surely it is only right that you should give the owners of the land the amount of the loss they have sustained owing to the value of the land falling. My main object in rising was to administer a little chastisement to my honourable friend the member for Christchurch City (Mr. Collins), in order to show his constituents that he does not

possess that honesty of purpose which he would have his constituents believe. There was one other remark which fell from the honourable member for Oamaru—and I am sorry he is not

9.30. present—that is, regarding the parent having the right now to allocate sections of five hundred acres each to his children. I think it would be very foolish indeed if a father did subdivide his property in that manner just now. I think, from our own knowledge of the dislike which the Minister of Lands has for any system of dummyism under any guise, that he would not approve of any parent in this country securing land in that manner—by simply a system of dummyism. Speaking generally upon the provisions of this Bill, I have always held that when the settlers of the country required land, or where large areas of land are not properly cultivated, and where the public require these lands, it is only right and proper that the land should be used for purposes of close settlement. I think there are some clauses which ought to have been placed in this Bill. One ought to have provided that no land should be taken from any man at a price less than he paid for it. I also think that a provision regarding the division for families ought to have been inserted. Personally, I do not like the constitution of the Board as it is at present fixed. I think as the Minister brought it down it was infinitely better, and it secured, at any rate, a more satisfactory mode of purchase than is likely to prevail under the present Board. That is my opinion generally on the measure, and I shall not delay the House longer in connection with it.

Mr. REEVES.—I do not rise, like the honourable gentleman who has just sat down, to chastise any one, that not being at all in my line; but I must compliment my honourable friend, with amazement tempered with awe, at the remarks with which he opened his speech with reference to my colleague the honourable member for Christchurch City. The honourable gentleman expressed objections to the speech of the honourable member for Christchurch City on the ground that it was a great exhibition of sound and fury. If there is one person in Wellington who ought to be a judge about sound and fury it is the honourable gentleman. How many speeches have we heard from that quarter which could be summed up in those very words? When we remember the tremendous tone, the inflated language, the frowning brow, and the shaking fist which distinguish his harangues, I can only say that, when he refers to my colleague's speech as being sound and fury, the only retort is from that magnificent scene in "Paradise Lost" where Satan, in language almost as high-flown as that of the honourable member for Clutha, takes upon himself to reprove sin. My honourable friend expressed the warmest sympathy with the honourable member for Riccarton on the treatment which he has been subjected to, and spoke in warm terms in regard to "the pusillanimous conduct" of those Radical members who on this question have stuck to the Bill and

Mr. T. Mackenzie

the Government. The honourable member for Riccarton no doubt valued that sympathy at its real worth; but, if there is anything which should have opened the eyes of some of my honourable friends who may have wavered for a moment in supporting the Government, it must have been the fact of the large amount of sympathy which has been given to them from that quarter opposite. Why, during the last three years and a half the breasts of the honourable gentlemen opposite have exuded sympathy in streams for any honourable member on this side of the House who for a moment or two found himself in antagonism to the Government. Let any honourable gentleman on this side of the House object to a Liberal measure, or to any detail in it, and he will always find any amount of the milk of human kindness gushing forth from the bosoms of those honourable members opposite. It is a very old story. Now for the arguments which have been brought to bear against the Bill. First of all, let me take the speech of my colleague the honourable member for Christchurch City (Mr. G. J. Smith). He explained that he was a friend of the measure,—and I think he is; but, at the same time, there are friends and friends. There are friends who dwell on the bright side of a measure, and there are friends who so entirely devote their speeches to anything which may seem to them the dark side that they sit down having entirely forgotten to say anything in praise of the measure of which they are in favour. That is the position of my honourable friend. He found fault with the Bill, and I dare say if he had spoken at greater length he would have found something to say in praise of it. It does not take a long time to say a few words in favour of a Liberal measure—a measure referred to the people of the country in its present shape, or very much so, at the last election, and which received from them enthusiastic support, and which received the support of my honourable friend. It would not have taken much time for my honourable friend to have said something in favour of the Bill. The honourable gentleman referred to the caucus, and explained that he had taken the liberty of referring to the proceedings there, but he did not think that he had done wrong, inasmuch as an account of the caucus appeared in a daily paper, which he presumed was authoritative. Of course, I can quite imagine that he naturally assumed that; but I think he assumed it wrongly, seeing that the account was incorrect in an important particular, and so imperfect as to be grossly misleading. Of course it may be said that no one should be afraid to repeat anything which passes at a caucus, but the custom always has been to regard a caucus as being of a confidential character. Members are there encouraged to express their thoughts without fear because they know they are speaking among confidential friends, and for that reason the proceedings are regarded as confidential. When any member does not agree to regard them as confidential he does not go. That is the usual practice.

Then, with regard to the caucus, the honourable member for Riccarton mentioned that he was badly treated by the Whips, because they did not send him notice. I understand that the Whips did send him notice, and made every effort to get him served with the notice.

Mr. G. W. RUSSELL.—On being told by the senior Whip I went straight to the messengers' room. I found the card lying there, but the messengers denied that they were asked to find me.

Mr. REEVES.—I can only say that the senior Whip informed me that the messengers were distinctly asked to make every effort to find the honourable gentleman, and the reason why he was not found was that he had recently changed his lodgings; and one messenger at least went to the lodgings where he had previously been. That is what I am told. Passing from the caucus to the Bill,—a much more interesting subject,—my honourable friend objected to part of the Bill forasmuch as it made no proper provision for allotments. That has already been explained by the Minister, I think, in a perfectly unanswerable manner—that it is unnecessary to put in certain amendments because the Bill provides for allotments already. Reference was made to Mr. Ballance and his sympathy with allotments. This Bill has to be read with a portion of the Land Act which provides for special settlements—with that portion which was passed by him as Minister of Lands. I say it has been proved in an absolutely unanswerable way that allotments can be purchased and can be cut up and distributed under the law as it exists under the Land Act and under this Bill. Why, therefore, encumber the Bill with that which is not wanted—that which cannot do any good, and might possibly do some harm? If we are to admit that a Minister is to accept anything which is offered and put it in his Bill, on the plea that it can do no harm, I ask, where is it to end? And how long are we to take in getting measures through the House? Then, there is the complaint about the area. The honourable member regretted that the area was not cut down to an exceedingly small limit. Again he ignored the perfectly-clear and unanswerable explanation that has been given—namely, that under this Bill, unlike the previous Bill, the owner of an estate can demand that if a portion of his land is to be compulsorily taken, the whole shall be taken. The result of limiting the area to exceedingly small farms would be simply this: We should not take a single large estate unless the owner wanted it taken. Why did we pass the graduated tax? Was it to cut up small farms of two or three thousand acres? No, it was to burst up those great estates which represent the land-monopoly in this country, and which I, three years ago, said were an obstacle to enterprise, a barrier to settlement, and a social pest, and concerning which I repeat the same words now. It was not to attack small or moderate-sized farms that we brought in the graduated tax, that we brought in the Land Bill, and are bringing in this Bill now. It was to burst, to break up, and sweep

away gradually those great estates, which are, in my opinion, one of the greatest obstacles to the prosperity and progress of New Zealand. If what my honourable friend and colleague from Christchurch proposed was assented to, I say we could not break up one single great estate in New Zealand under this Bill. What would be done? We should ask for, say, 1,000 acres or 2,000 acres to cut up into small farms. The owner would say, "No, take the whole of the land; I have a right to demand that;" and, inasmuch as we could not possibly divide the second- or third-class land on the estate,—and such land exists on all large estates—we should not be able to divide it into areas which would pay the occupants—and we could not possibly take the estate at all. Yet honourable gentlemen will go on repeating this parrot cry about a blot in the Bill in that it allows land to be cut up into comparatively large areas. Honourable members will ignore the fact of our being forced to make that provision in the measure. Yet they call that honest criticism. Well, I do not. Then, the question of the offer of land near Christchurch was brought up. Why, the facts with regard to the land near Christchurch are notorious. The honourable member for Christchurch City (Mr. Collins) and I waited on the Minister of Lands some time ago about this question. It is no new thing. We all went into the facts of the case, and it was shown that the land could not be taken because the price was monstrous and exorbitant. My honourable colleague not being a tyrant, such as the Opposition papers try to make out, he did not attempt to override the Land Board and force them to take the land at an exorbitant rate. The member for Christchurch City tells us he has an acquaintance who has a brother who has a friend who is ready to offer some land at £20 an acre. Why was not the offer of the land made? Any one who wanted to offer any land to the Minister could have done so at any time, and he could do so now. If that gentleman is ready to offer that land, and it is really good land, I hope the honourable gentleman will telegraph to the owner to-morrow morning, and, if an offer is made, we shall be most glad to go into the matter and see whether we can do business. Then, we are told that this Board, although the member for the district is cut out of it, is nevertheless entirely a political Board. Well, we were told last year that one of the faults of the Board was that it was not a political Board—that it was merely a Civil Service Board; that there would be no political element in it, no element of resistance, no element in touch with the people; and that it was bad because it was a non-political Civil Service Board. Now, however, we are told that a Civil Service Board is a political one. I try to distinguish between a Civil Service Board and a political Board. There is a considerable difference. As every one knows, a Civil servant is not a politician. We are told that the Civil servants are driven slaves—the dumb-dogs of the Ministers of the day; that they are trembling in their shoes, and dare not call

Mr. Reeves

their souls their own, dreading every minute, unless their political views are in touch with the Ministry of the day, to be dismissed. Sir, every man must speak for his own department. I can only speak for the four branches of the Civil Service which I have the honour to administer, and I unhesitatingly say that if those remarks are levelled at my officers they are an insult to the officers and a slander upon myself. If I were standing at the bar of Heaven I should be able to say, with a clear conscience, that my officers are not afraid of me, that I have never attempted to bully them for any political purpose, and have never attempted to bring pressure to bear upon them. It is a slander of so frightful a character that I am justified in speaking of it in this unusually strong language, because if I were guilty of such conduct I should not only be a tyrant, but a contemptible, ungentlemanly, and dishonourable man. I should be unfit to be in this House.

Sir R. STOUT.—Do not characterize some of your colleagues.

Mr. REEVES.—I say that if I were guilty of that conduct I should be a contemptible, a dishonourable man, and that, therefore, if that accusation is levelled against me, I am justified in repelling it in strong language. When I am no longer a Minister I shall appeal to the officers I have left behind me to say, if any opportunity is ever offered to them, what my treatment of them has been. Now, we are told, in tones almost of lamentation, that this is a Bill for the abolition of freehold throughout New Zealand—that henceforth freehold will only be held conditionally, and that nobody will feel for a moment safe in holding an allotment of land. What a singular statement to make, when anybody in this country can hold as much as a thousand acres of land, not an acre of which can possibly be touched under this Bill! Sir, to some extent the State has always had the right to resume land in New Zealand for certain purposes. Such has always been a right, and therefore to that extent all freehold was conditional. It is true that now large freeholds will be held subject to the right of resumption by the State; and I say, a very good thing that they should be so held, and that it is only right the State should insist upon its power to resume any portion of the larger freeholds of the colony when to do so is absolutely necessary for settlement. I, therefore, am not prepared to join in lamenting the fact that the larger freeholders in New Zealand henceforth will only be able to feel that they have only a conditional tenure. If it does cause them a certain amount of uneasiness I shall not lament; but I doubt if it will cause them a great amount of uneasiness and alarm. After all, what is the worst they can dread? Merely that a superfluous part of their land will be taken from them at full and fair valuations. Are there no trades in New Zealand the members of which would only be too glad to feel that the worst that could threaten them would be that their premises and plant and position might be taken from

them at a full and fair valuation? What is that known as but compensation? Are there no businesses in New Zealand which would be only too glad to feel that the worst that could threaten them would be dispossession with compensation? That is the worst that threatens the freeholders. I do not think it is a very terrible worst. However, now we come to the great question of the eternal lease and the perpetual lease; and here, Sir, I have to make a reference to the remarks of my friend the honourable member for Riccarton. I confess it is no very great pleasure to me to have to stand up in this House to reply to arguments urged by gentlemen who belong to the same party, and who were elected very much on the same platform, with myself. We have had some desperate battles in this House during the last four or five years, in which I have not shirked taking my share; but there always was satisfaction in days gone by, inasmuch as it was a straight-out fight between men on this side and men on that. One could go into those fights with an amount of enthusiasm and pleasure which I cannot say I feel in replying to flank attacks coming from gentlemen whom I regard on most questions as political allies. I am sorry that the honourable gentleman has adopted the tone which he has adopted, and has made reference not merely to the questions on which we differ, but to the conduct of those who, like myself, have thought it wise to stand up for the Bill as it is on the present occasion. I think he should have justified his own line of conduct and his own views without reflecting upon those of his friends who have thought it right to act differently. He might have given us credit, I think, for motives as disinterested and as patriotic as his own.

Mr. G. W. RUSSELL.—I did not question motives.

Mr. REEVES.—I am glad to accept the honourable gentleman's assurance that he did not. All I can say is that, in the heat of the moment, he appeared to use language, probably not intentionally, which seemed to me to attribute unworthy motives to gentlemen on this side—that is to say, he attributed to them distinctly the motive of fear.

Mr. G. W. RUSSELL.—Weakness.

Mr. REEVES.—Well, "weakness," which is bad, and fear, which is worse. He pictured us going back to our constituents excusing ourselves for acting thus because we were frightened. Now, that is attributing to us something which would not be very creditable to us were it true; but it is not true. The honourable gentleman, if he were to consider the matter, would never impute it. Fear, Sir, is not characteristic of these gentlemen. Fear is not a characteristic of the gentlemen I see around me here. There are gentlemen who sit amongst us here who have voted with the Government, who have fought the battle of Liberalism, without fear for many years past; and we have not usually been accused of the vice of fear. We have been accused of many bad qualities. I think there is hardly

an abusive epithet in the English language which has not been launched at even my humble and unworthy self, but I do not think I have ever before been called a coward. It is altogether a novelty, and I am bound to say I think it is totally undeserved; and I hope the honourable gentleman will not persist in that line of argument when he happens to differ upon the details of a measure. The best of us must differ; we cannot always agree upon details; but the question we are deciding now is one that affects a matter of expediency, and, Sir, there is a good old proverb that the rule of expediency is the rule of honour. We say, however perfect the honourable gentleman's motives may be, that it was expedient to accept the Bill as it stood because we wanted to get the Bill passed, and we preferred getting the Bill passed with the lease in perpetuity in it to getting it passed with the perpetual lease and with, tacked on to that, the right of converting that lease into a freehold.

An Hon. MEMBER.—Who proposed that?

Mr. REEVES.—It is my judgment—and I have had some experience here—that, had the amendment of the honourable member for Riccarton been passed, the best we could have hoped for was that the Bill would be passed with the option of the freehold tacked on to it. Yes; we have had that experience. I have been in this House before; the honourable member for Riccarton has not. When we sent the perpetual-lease Bill to the Upper House before, it was sent back with that tacked on to it.

Sir R. STOUT.—When?

Mr. REEVES.—In 1891; and I do not want to see that again. It was because that was done then that we introduced the lease in perpetuity in 1892. We were forced back upon that—that was the only alternative. We did not want to see that done again, and that is why—

Mr. G. W. RUSSELL.—You have strengthened the Council since then.

Mr. REEVES.—We have strengthened the Council, but, I am sorry to say, we have not a majority there.

Mr. G. W. RUSSELL.—Put them in.

Mr. REEVES.—There are political associations—the honourable gentleman appears to think that the voice of political associations is the *vox Dei*—which objected to our strengthening the Council six months ago. The friends of the honourable gentleman stood out against the strengthening of the Upper House, and, in deference to their views, and to the views of many members of the Liberal party, the Government did not attempt to strengthen the Upper House; but, it seems, we cannot please everybody. Then we gave way on that point, and now it seems that we ought not to have given way. The point is that—whether we ought to strengthen the Upper House or ought not; there is a majority against us on this subject up there. We have to legislate with the facts staring us in the face, and we have to take those facts into consideration. We have to make up our minds which is the best thing to be done under the circumstances, and we

now believe that the best thing we can do is to get this Bill, in the form in which the country accepted it at the general election, with what we believe reasonable amendments, on the statute-book rather than risk having it thrown out or mutilated, and we acted accordingly. I say that in doing that we did a right thing, and that we have nothing to fear from our constituents any more than the honourable gentleman has to fear from his. I am not afraid to face my constituents on that point any more than I was afraid to face them in 1892, when, against my wishes, we accepted the lease in perpetuity; or than I was afraid to face them in 1891-92, when we did not exempt all improvements from the graduated tax, although during the previous general election we had been pledged up to the lips to do it. We were reproached in 1891-92 because we did not sweep away from the graduated tax and the land-tax all improvements, but we said it was not safe to do it. But as soon as it was safe our party, the great mass of our party, stood loyally by us to do it. Exactly similar reproaches to what were hurled at us then are being hurled at us now; but the loyalty of the party stood the test of time and of public criticism then, and that loyalty was indorsed by our constituents when the facts of the case were fairly laid before them, as they will be again. There is one argument I must refer to. We are constantly being told that this is not Mr. Ballance's Bill—that Mr. Ballance's Bill was something quite different, and that we are being false to his memory and to his precepts, because he introduced a different Bill. Now, Mr. Ballance was Premier when the Minister of Lands introduced and we accepted the lease in perpetuity in 1892. It was Mr. Ballance who got me, with a very heavy heart, to agree to support my honourable friend in substituting the lease in perpetuity for the perpetual lease with revaluation. It was Mr. Ballance who indorsed the measure of 1892—the Land for Settlements Bill of 1892, with the lease in perpetuity in it, and without revaluation; and it was Mr. Ballance who went further than that and supported my honourable friend, when the Legislative Council knocked out the compulsory clauses and made it an optional Bill, in accepting the Bill, on the principle that half a loaf is better than no bread. Mr. Ballance was not only a man who had theories that were Radical, but he was a statesman, and knew that, unless you will legislate for the best under a given state of circumstances, you cannot expect to secure for the people the maximum of advantage that can be got. In the face of great obstacles Mr. Ballance knew that it was necessary sometimes to manoeuvre in the face of the enemy if you wish to carry the enemy's position. Mr. Ballance knew that a fanatical adherence to extreme theories is not advisable when you are in the midst of battle; and Mr. Ballance knew that, when you have a Bill which is a thoroughly good one, when you have got such a great principle as compulsory purchase on the statute-book, it is not advisable to wreck or to injure

Mr. Reeves

that by seeking to quarrel with the tenure, which, after all, is secondary in such a measure as this.

Mr. O'REGAN.—Sir, with the indulgence of honourable members, I should like to make a few remarks. I do not rise to offer any further opposition to the Bill, because a renewal of resistance to the wishes of my honourable friend the Minister of Lands at the present stage would be injudicious. I do not think the opposition shown to-night is warranted by the emphatic manner in which the House has accepted the Bill. I have all along manifested a very consistent and persistent opposition to its principles; but at this juncture I should like to say that I fully recognise the laudable motives actuating the Minister in steadily adhering to his measure. No matter how widely we may differ, I cannot but admit that in regard to this Bill he has honestly endeavoured to get placed on the statute-book a practical and beneficent Act. Now that the Bill is on the eve of passing this House, I only hope that the prediction which I have made with regard to its outcome will not be verified. I think that the honourable gentleman is actuated by the very same motives as I am, and that he does not wish to see this country get into the hands of a landed class. He knows from practical experience the evils of land-monopoly, and he has no desire to see them repeated in this colony. If the Bill will do all that is claimed for it—if it will provide homes for the homeless, and work for the workless, and if it will go even a short way in the direction of releasing this colony from the evils that have come upon it—no one will be better pleased than myself. I do not believe that this Bill is going to do all that the honourable gentleman claims for it. If, however, the prediction I have expressed, and which I still believe in, is not verified by the test of experience, so much the better for New Zealand. I shall be very much pleased indeed if future events prove me to be a false prophet. I know that some honourable gentlemen were surprised that I divided the House upon the Bill on the second reading. Honourable gentlemen, I know, did not think that it was advisable on my part to do so. I have heard that some honourable members have ascribed unworthy motives to me, and, that being so, I should like to say, even at the risk of repetition, that even if I had been the only one to walk into the "Noes" lobby the division would have been called for. That division had no doubt a very embarrassing effect upon many honourable members, and especially some of those whom I see on the Opposition benches. They were forced to choose between three alternatives—either to vote with the Government, or to vote with me, or to run away. The leading members of the Opposition voted for the Bill; several of them walked into the lobby with me; and the others abstained from voting rather than record their votes. I do not regret for one moment that the division was taken. I took it for a principle, and, although not satisfied with the result, I can only hope that the

outcome of the Bill when it becomes law will realise that all its supporters expect, and all that the Minister of Lands confidently hopes from it.

Mr. CROWTHER.—It is very amusing indeed to be told by the last speaker that we have spent all the evening in what has been called “gush.” I think it would be a very good name for it. When I looked around and saw the galleries so very well filled I felt sure the debate would go on until half-past ten. In the next place, I am well pleased that the last speaker has set a very much better example. I have listened very carefully and attentively to every word, and I have heard no member of this House say that he was opposed to the Bill, either on one side or on the other of the House. I think we could show that we were one and all working for the good and interest of this country and people, without such personalities as were used in this debate to-night, and it pained me very much to hear them. I think we should, so far as we can, try to make this Bill workable, so as to meet all our requirements, according to our own views. In the measure as it exists before us to-night I am disappointed. I thought, when the objection was raised by the honourable member for Wellington City (Mr. Bell) as to the application of clause 3 mentioned by him, a great deal more would have been said bearing on the clause. That is what I want to hear about, and it would have forwarded the progress of the business very much if we had devoted more of our attention to this part of the business. At the same time, I must say that I shall be exceedingly sorry to think that any part of this money more than the amount authorised in the Bill will be expended, because I believe the amount stated in the Bill is quite ample. I think that even the amount of the present appropriation would have been sufficient for the first year. We all know how very useful it is and what a comfortable occupation it is to spend money; and I feel quite safe in saying that we all know what a difficult task it is to spend money so that it will pay the interest that we expect out of the expenditure. That being the case, I am quite justified in directing the attention of the House to this aspect of the matter. I shall follow the last speaker's example and sit down as soon as ever I can, and I hope that the speakers who follow will do the same. With regard to the application of this clause, it is liable to more than one interpretation, and I sincerely trust the Minister of Lands, when we meet again next year, will be able to justify this House having reposed in him that confidence that we all know he has received and has deserved—that is, by informing us that he has not spent more than £250,000 in one year. When this Bill came before us at an earlier stage I was not willing to support a motion in opposition to that moved by the honourable member for Dunedin City (Mr. Earnshaw)—that the amount to be expended should be limited to £250,000 for the first year. If it is found next year that the amount, £250,000, has been exceeded

I should be very willing to support such a motion. The amount should certainly not be more, and I am very much astonished now to hear that it is possible the whole five years' expenditure may be brought into one. I said, when speaking on this question before, that if the amount, instead of being a million and a quarter, were ten millions it would be too small. The requirements of this colony are such that if we get, say, ten millions, it would all go in the scramble. So far as the Board is concerned, I do not think it could be improved, and I quite agree with the members who have addressed the House, and who stated that it would not be advisable to constitute the Board from among the members of this House. At the same time I do not wish to cast any reflection upon honourable members, as I have no doubt they would have done their duty; but it is very hard indeed to do your duty sometimes, and there are very great drawbacks, especially if elections are going on. I think it is a very wise course indeed that that part of the Bill has been amended; and I hope that this Bill will become law, that it will be extremely successful in its operations, and that when we meet again we shall not have been disappointed.

Dr. NEWMAN.—The last speaker accused the House of having taken up three hours in “gush” upon this question, and one wonders why he added three minutes to the discussion. The Minister of Labour always reminds me, in the eager way in which he gets up to defend a pet supporter, of a mother bird with its chickens: he scratches and tries to drive away the attacker—and this has been repeated several times this session; but I should like to say a word or two with regard to my honourable friends the member for Riccarton and the member for Inangahua. The vehement way in which the honourable member for Riccarton and the honourable member for Inangahua addressed the House made one think that it was a pity they had to take up the position they did on this question. But it is not a question of their votes; the real question is, whether a man means what he says; and it is very easy for a man to go into the lobby as those two gentlemen have done and afterwards say, “I have not turned the Ministry out, although I voted against them.” We have heard a great deal about this the last few days in the lobby, and we heard during the past fortnight that when the eternal lease came on we should see the noble resolution of the members of the Government party. I laughed then, and the result shows exactly what I predicted it would be. The honourable member for Avon walked into the lobby against the Bill; but with the help of the Opposition, whom the honourable gentlemen opposite denounce, the Ministerial policy was saved and the Government was saved. I want to ask the Minister in charge of the Bill a question. We have had this question before us so often that we are tired of it. Major Atkinson brought in an appropriation of £10,000 to buy estates; then we had Mr. Ballance's Bill; and now we

have this Bill: and I do hope, considering the trouble that has been taken, that the Minister will not next year bring down a measure amending this, to let loose more floods of talk. It is exactly three weeks since the Minister told the House that if it did not pass this Bill that night at all events something terrible would happen; but three weeks afterwards the Bill is still in the House. And even now, Sir, the Bill is going to the Upper House in a condition I am sorry to see it going in. Surely the honourable gentleman ought to concur with the honourable member for Wellington City and recommit this Bill. To let it go to the Upper House in this condition is surely most unsatisfactory. I supported this Bill, and I voted for the £250,000 per annum; but I do think it ought to be made clear, as suggested by the honourable member for Wellington City, that no Minister should be able to mortgage ahead the whole amount for the five years in one year. I will give the honourable gentleman credit that he does not mean to do that; but it ought to be made clear in the Bill. I doubt whether £250,000 a year is needed over the five years. Looking to the fact that he is going to ask the House to borrow £250,000 a year for the purchase of Native land, that makes £500,000, and added to this you have the fact that they have already a very large amount of Crown land at present. It seems to me the supply of land will altogether outrun the demand. The Crown Lands Guide shows that last year only some two thousand five hundred people applied for land. I take it this year things will not be even so well. The craze for land is dying out, and people who might be expected to apply for land are going off to Coolgardie. Last year the land-sales were considerably diminished. If the Minister of Lands takes £500,000, with the Crown lands that are in hand he will have land for fifteen thousand settlers a year. I agree that this Bill should be passed, but I hope the honourable gentleman will not this year buy more land than is absolutely needed. I quite agree with other speakers that if the Minister of Lands buys any quantity of cultivated land near the railways people will not be induced to go upon land in a back-country. That seems to me very much to be deplored. It seems to me the waste lands of the Crown should be first settled, rather than that land which is now cultivated should be bought for such a purpose. The one other thing I regret in this Bill is that the Minister did not take up the amendment which proposed that £50,000 should be spent in the purchase of small allotments in the neighbourhood of towns. That would be more satisfactory than the present arrangement. I hope the Minister will yet change his mind on this, and that we shall not have it said in another place that this Bill is sent up in such a slovenly condition as it now appears to me to be in.

Mr. MILLS.—I have always recognised the great principle contained in this measure as one which I should like to see placed on the statute-book, and, mindful of that fact, I shall vote consistently for the third reading of this

Dr. Newman

Bill. I cannot on this occasion allow the statement made by the honourable member for Riccarton to go unchallenged. So long as I hold the honourable position of Whip of this party I shall certainly challenge any such statement as that made to the House this evening; and, if the honourable member for Riccarton requires more attention than is accorded to Ministers, then I can only say he is not likely to get it. It was considered by the Whips that it would be advantageous to hold a caucus meeting, and that arrangement was made about eleven o'clock on the Tuesday morning. We had then to send out notices, which took some time, and these were sent as quickly as possible, and the name of the honourable member for Riccarton was specially mentioned to the messenger as one he must find, if possible. We thought that honourable gentleman would, like other honourable members, be attending his Committee duties, and that that was where he would be, and we directed the messengers to search all round for him. I wish to assure him, so that there may be no misunderstanding, that it was entirely owing to himself and not to us that he was not found. So far as we could do so, we endeavoured to give him notice of the caucus as soon as possible. Therefore I hope the honourable gentleman will not again be in such a hurry to fancy that somebody wanted to "tread on the tail of his coat," to adopt the old expression. There is no reason for that, and, as a young member of the House, he should be careful not to find fault with us, especially when every effort was made to find him.

Mr. MACKINTOSH.—I wish to offer a few remarks with regard to what was said by the honourable member for Riccarton concerning the perpetual-leasing system with periodical adjustments of rent, as propounded by Henry George and other writers on the subject. Their idea is that after the lapse of a certain time persons who take up land should pay an increased rental. The best land and the easiest cultivated was taken up thirty years ago. The lands now remaining are lands of a very difficult character to contend with; and I say that the lease in perpetuity is the best system ever introduced in these colonies for the only class who will consent to take up the Crown lands now available—that is, men of small means. And I feel sure that the name of John McKenzie, as Minister of Lands, will go down to posterity with honour in connection with the lease in perpetuity when Henry George and others will have passed away into oblivion amongst the dust and ashes of this world. It is absurd to hear gentlemen who never earned a shilling at hard work, who never held a plough or have had anything to do with farming, advocating a system they know nothing about otherwise than theoretically. A farmer taking up land nowadays has to work very hard; it takes all his time and that of his family to make both ends meet: yet, if he does not make the profit he should, he works on contentedly in the belief that his sons will get amply paid in the future. I protest against a periodical

adjustment of rent, as it is calculated to discourage the farmer if he knows that after many years of toil and difficulty the period will arrive when the rent will be doubled—possibly trebled. It will be screwed up to the highest value,—forgetting that for many years the land has not paid him working-expenses. I will not waste further time with theories. The country is satisfied with the lease in perpetuity.

Hon. MEMBERS.—No.

Mr. MACKINTOSH.—I say, Yes; and, if a vote of the people of the colony is taken from one end to the other, I am certain that five to one of the colonists will vote for the lease in perpetuity. The Land Boards at every meeting have numerous applications from persons who are desirous of having their holdings varied from the former systems to the lease in perpetuity. It is acceptable to those who toil in connection with the land, and who have to make a living off the land; and any land-laws passed in this House which are not acceptable to the people who are prepared to take up land would not be right, however good in theory. The lease in perpetuity is acceptable simply because it meets the wants and wishes of the people. The lease in perpetuity meets the case of men of small means particularly who are prepared to take up land. They have not to pay cash down. They pay 4 per cent. on the capital value of the land.

Hon. MEMBERS.—5 per cent.

Mr. MACKINTOSH.—4 per cent. Under the Land Act there are special circumstances in connection with this measure that make it necessary to charge 5 per cent.; but the law passed a few years ago made it 4 per cent. Surely it is right that the lease in perpetuity should be applied in future to lands which are repurchased for the purposes of settlement. Then these lands will remain the property of the State for ever. Under the lease in perpetuity they will remain the property of the State, and a revenue will be annually coming in from the public estate. There is a matter in connection with this measure, and other measures mentioned in the Financial Statement, that I wish to refer to, and that is, the necessity for a State valuation of land. I am not quite clear about the new Board proposed by the Minister of Lands. I think the member for the district should have been retained on the Board, and had the matter been again brought before the House I am satisfied a majority would have voted for it. The member residing in the district could afford information in regard to estates that very few other persons could give. This would exonerate the Minister entirely from blame; and, although the member of the district and the other members of the Board might have different opinions as to the value of estates, the final decision would rest with the Government.

11.0. The Government of this colony have undertaken a great national work, and I think they are anxious to conduct it in a way that will be calculated to inspire confidence in the minds of the people not only of

this colony, but of the outside world. The proposals of the Minister of Lands are perfectly correct. Some of the speakers on this Bill have said that, while we have so much Crown lands left, there should be no land purchased by the State. I maintain quite the contrary. I maintain that it would be very unwise to construct branch railways, and, further, main roads, while we have large districts unpeopled—altogether without population—and railways passing through them. The Government have undertaken a good work, and I do trust the House will pass this measure without alteration. And I trust that before twelve months' time a large number of people will be placed on the lands under it; and I also hope that a proper State valuation will be made which will guide the Government in land-purchases, and in making advances to settlers. The present State valuation under which the land-tax is collected is well known not to be reliable; in some cases it is far too low. In Southland I can point to an estate that cannot be purchased under from £6 to £8 an acre, yet this estate is only valued for taxation purposes at £1 15s. an acre. How many more properties there are in the same position I know not. But I know this: that in former times valuers had directions to endeavour to arrange the matter amicably with the owner, and that has been done. Some of the men who acted as valuers were thoroughly competent, and some of them were not—so that the valuations arrived at are not even. Now, if we had three competent gentlemen selected, with power to employ experts if necessary, when they so desired it, to make a thoroughly satisfactory State valuation of the lands within a land district, I think it would give general satisfaction. I may say that one set of valuers would not do: the men who would give a correct and satisfactory valuation in Southland would not do in Hawke's Bay and other parts of the colony. Each district should have its own valuers in order to make a thoroughly good and sound State valuation.

Mr. McGUIRE.—Very few honourable gentlemen who have spoken on this Bill have touched on the amendment moved by the honourable member for Wellington City (Mr. Bell). That amendment goes to show that under this Bill, although the Minister can only spend £250,000 in one year, he may contract to spend £1,250,000. Now, I think it should not be in the power of any Minister to do that. I think his power in this direction should be curtailed to an expenditure of £250,000 in one year. In resettling the lands of the South and placing people on the land in the way indicated in this Bill, we are giving each £1,000 as an eternal loan, which has never to be paid back to the State. I think the House will agree with me that this is a very extravagant way to resettle a country that has been already settled. That that is the position cannot be doubted by any one who has carefully read this Bill. Now, are we not paying too much for the purpose of resettling this country? I can take honourable gentlemen to places in

the North Island where land can be bought at very small expense as compared with the cost of repurchasing these private estates where settlement already exists; and, until we have settled the other parts of the colony, I think no further settlement should take place there. And, again, when we take into consideration the quantity of land that has been offered to the Minister during the last year—nearly a million acres—I cannot see the necessity for a Bill of this description. There is sufficient evidence, to my mind, to show that there is no necessity at all for a Bill on the lines proposed. I admit the right of the State to take freehold land, providing the State has no land for settlement. But if a man or woman is beneficially occupying his or her land, the State should not interfere in the beneficial occupation of such land, although it should have the power to take land if absolutely necessary in the interests of the State; but I think the time has not arrived for that as yet. If “freehold” means anything it means that there should be security of tenure. This Bill destroys all security of tenure. Under this Bill, what is the use of a Crown grant—what is the use of a certificate of title—if the Minister of Lands, with his three officers, can come in and take away the land of settlers, and make no provision for those who have growing families? The amendment which was moved by the honourable member for Hawke's Bay was to meet the case where a man had a family growing up—to prevent the Government from stepping in and taking away his land and compelling the family to leave their home for the purpose of procuring land in this or some other country. That kind of thing, I think, is wrong in a country like this. The State has no right to step in and take away land from one family for the purpose of giving it to another. That is a great injustice, which should not be tolerated. The Minister of Lands and the Government may think a Bill of this kind true Liberalism, but, to my simple mind, it appears robbery. I also think that the man or woman in beneficial occupation of land should not be turned adrift out of it. In the case of a man who is using his land in such a way that he is adding to the exports and contributing to the rates and taxes, I think it is unfair and unjust that he should be dispossessed of his land; it seems to me a monstrous thing. Under this Bill all sorts of corruption may come in. If this Bill is passed it will allow the Government to take away a man's home, and I do not think any one will say that is a right thing to do. On the contrary, I think it is a cruel and monstrous thing for any Government to be guilty of; and I say that any majority of members who help them to do that will commit a great cruelty, and do a great injustice to the people of New Zealand. This Bill, if passed, will tend to destroy the love of home, and to separate families, and these are things no State should attempt to do: indeed, it should rather try to cement families, and consolidate them in every way possible. This Bill, if passed, will drive people away from their fathers' houses to search for homes in other places,

Mr. McGuire

although the father may have sufficient land on which to settle his sons and daughters. This Bill is on the lines of robbing Peter to pay Paul. We take from Mr. Jones in order to give to Mr. Smith. Now, that is not a proper thing to be in any Bill. It is a dangerous Bill in every way I look at it, and it tends to destroy the interest of the people in the country. Those who have heretofore made homes for themselves by industry and perseverance are about to have their homes taken away from them in the most unjust and tyrannical manner. And, again, if the Government succeed—and I believe they will succeed—in passing this Bill, I warn them that there are men at the present time in the different parts of New Zealand putting their heads together for the purpose of fleecing the Government in connection with the Land for Settlements Bill. They will pay very dearly for the land they take under this Bill. No matter who the Minister of Lands may be, he will find men in the colony who will be able to outwit him, and the consequence will be that the unfortunate taxpayer of the colony will have to pay the piper. It is said that this Bill is an improvement on last year's Bill. It does not appear to me to be a great improvement. It may be an improvement, but it wants to be improved still more; it wants to be improved out of the House altogether. Now let us pause and seriously consider what we are going to do. The House is about to embark on a land-gambling scheme at the instance of the Government and the Minister of Lands. They are about to take the land of one section of the community in order to give it to another. The Government might be justified in doing that if they had no land for settlement, but we have millions of acres of land suitable for settlement—land that pays neither rates nor taxes, yields nothing to our revenue, and adds nothing to our exports. No prudent farmer or business-man would purchase more land than he was able profitably to work, more especially if he were compelled to borrow the money to do so. Well, Sir, this is what the Government is doing. The Crown and Native lands are the largest estates at present in the country; nevertheless, they want us to borrow money to buy private lands already settled, and which are paying rates and taxes. We have heard a great deal from the Minister of Lands about the Cheviot Estate, and what has been done there. We know that some of this land has been offered for cash, but very little was bought in that way, although we know for a fact that it was advertised by flaming placards all over New Zealand and Australia, to induce people to take it up. And all the population the Government has been able to settle upon this property, including men, women, and children, are 171. We have almost as many co-operative labourers making improvements on this estate: the Minister has informed the House that there are 163 co-operative labourers employed improving this estate. Honourable members can therefore imagine the amount of money spent on this estate with its 171 people.

The Minister of Lands is determined, as far as public funds are concerned, to make the Cheviot Estate one of the most flourishing in the colony. Why, the money spent on that estate, if lands were judiciously purchased with it from the Natives, would settle thousands of people. But that would not suit the Minister of Lands or his Government. It was necessary that something should be done at the time of the elections in order that, as an honourable gentleman said, the Government might carry all the southern elections before them. Having succeeded in this, I am surprised that the Minister persists in going on with what he must know is not in the interests of the country. Of course, certain members of the House would make us believe that this Bill is a Liberal measure. It is a measure of spoliation, and nothing else. If the Minister were really in earnest, if the Government are in earnest in the settlement of the country, there is plenty of unsettled country that could be profitably occupied; if they are in earnest to settle the "unemployed" difficulty, there are on the Government maps hundreds of roads which are now standing bush, on which profitable employment could be given, to the great advantage of the country in opening up Crown lands for settlement, or giving a road to settlers who have already purchased lands, or Crown tenants, to get upon their holdings. But this is not their object. We have heard a great deal of the aims and objects of the Liberal party from these self-styled Liberals; but save me from the injustice of such Liberalism! I am perfectly certain the time is not far distant when the Government will appear in their true light, in which they appear to some at present—the greatest deceivers of the people that ever sat on those benches—that is my honest opinion. When the mist that now surrounds the people is cleared away they will then behold them in their true colours—deceivers, nothing but deceivers. It is said that the farmers' sons are afraid to leave their homes in order to get land in other parts of the colony. I say this is a libel on farmers' sons. Surely they have the same enterprise as their fathers, and do not want to be always tied to their mothers' apron-strings. They will be better men if allowed to go on their own hook. If the Government left people alone they would be more self-reliant, and better able to work out their own salvation, and we should then have a country that would be prosperous, contented, and happy. Sir, we have the makings of one of the best countries in the world, and I am beginning to think it is one of the worst managed under the sun. I did intend to move an amendment that no estate should be purchased under this Act till six weeks after the meeting of the House, in order to give the parties whose lands are to be taken an opportunity of petitioning the House. I will not now move this amendment, as it would only meet the fate of amendments moved by myself and others. We are giving to the Minister powers under this Bill which may be exercised in a most corrupt and op-

pressive manner. We should not place ourselves in that position; our actions should be such that they would bear inspection. I am perfectly certain of one thing, that if the Minister were really anxious to settle the "unemployed" question he would have no difficulty in doing so. It can be settled by opening up the country with roads and bridges, and spending the sums voted for public works. The special settlements the honourable gentleman has already established are in most places a failure. And why? Simply from the want of roads; and it is so with all settlements where people with small means are placed on the land: if they do not get facilities in the shape of roads and bridges, the settlement must necessarily be a failure. We are to give, under this Bill, on the average to each settler £1,000 to purchase land which has already been held in profitable occupation, and which is paying rates and taxes. I feel sure of one thing, that the Government of the country, and the honourable gentlemen who are supporting them through thick and thin, through right and wrong, will repent when it is too late. What the country requires is honest administration, and such an administration cannot be obtained until we have men on the Treasury benches who will do justice to all classes.

Mr. BUCHANAN.—Sir, not having been present when the honourable gentleman moved the third reading of this Bill, I am speaking somewhat in the dark as to what he really did say. I wish now to ask the honourable gentleman whether he refused to recommit the Bill in fulfilment of his promise on the morning when the Bill was taken through Committee. On that occasion, when speaking in support of the clause introduced by the honourable member for Palmerston, and not wishing to obstruct, I asked the Minister whether he would not consent to consult the Law Officers, and so guard himself from admitting anything against the principles of the Bill. The honourable gentleman consented to this course; and I at once ceased speaking, and allowed the Bill to proceed as far as I was concerned. I am given to understand that the honourable gentleman, contrary to what he led the House to understand, has absolutely refused to recommit the Bill. May I ask him if this is correct?

Mr. J. MCKENZIE.—I will tell the honourable gentleman when I reply.

Mr. BUCHANAN.—I suppose I must be content with that. The Minister of Education, in speaking to the Bill to-night, said he did not regret that large freeholders should be conditional freeholders, liable to have their holdings taken from them at any moment. That is a very serious statement to make, so serious that I am satisfied great numbers of workingmen in the colony will be liable to lose their employment. Such a statement as that is enough to paralyse the working of a great many freeholds in this colony, and to do enormous mischief generally. Then, the honourable gentleman said that the borrowing of £250,000 per annum by this Bill was not really borrowing; that it was merely exchanging

money for land, and that the settlers would largely benefit thereby. Now, Sir, supposing we have not yet reached the bed-rock of the price for land; supposing the land should—as I fear it will—still fall in price; and supposing the honourable gentleman introduces what he has already promised to introduce—namely, a Fair Rent Bill—what then would be the position of this borrowed money? What would then be the position of the security on which the money is borrowed? Would it not be much worse than the railways, public buildings, and other securities we already possess for a great deal of our borrowed money? The honourable gentleman also said that a fair Court was provided, so that full compensation could be given for any land taken, and that there was therefore no reason to have any fear or dread whatever. It was only this afternoon I met one of the oldest settlers in the Colony of New Zealand, and he informed me that he had recently sold his horses and ploughs, because he did not any longer feel himself secure in improving his estate, simply because of the sword which had been suspended over his property by this Bill. I regret very much indeed that this Bill is likely to pass in its present form, because it will do an enormous amount of mischief throughout the colony. The Government could easily have passed a Bill—and I should have supported them in doing so—to get all the land required for close settlement near the towns. I am glad the Minister of Education has now come into the House, because I wish to refer to a statement he made a few minutes ago. If I correctly understood him, he said that he had been making great efforts to procure land for close settlement in the immediate vicinity of Christchurch. I have had the opportunity of perusing some correspondence between the Lands Department and a gentleman who wished to sell some land to the Government in that vicinity; and on the 13th June last the reply from the Crown Lands Office was that the Government did not require any land near Christchurch. This letter was written from the Crown Lands

Office, Christchurch; and I should like to know how it is to be reconciled with the statement made by the Hon. the Minister of Education, that he had made every effort to secure land in the vicinity of Christchurch for close settlement: while at that very time this letter was written by the Lands Department, in Christchurch, stating that the Government did not want land.

Mr. REEVES.—Who was the man?

Mr. BUCHANAN.—I will tell the honourable gentleman privately. The Government, at the time of writing the letter, did not even take the trouble to inspect the land. I do not wish to make any further remarks on this Bill. I deeply regret that the Government does not make greater efforts to settle the Native and Crown lands instead of passing such a confiscation Bill as this.

Mr. MASSEY.—Before you put the question, Sir, I should just like to say a word or two in support of the amendment, and, in doing so, I

shall confine myself to the clauses in the Bill embodying the borrowing policy. But before going on to deal with the amendment I should like to refer to a statement which was made by the Hon. the Minister of Education. The same statement was referred to by the honourable member for Wairarapa. The Minister of Education told us that his colleague the Minister of Lands had made enormous efforts to acquire land in the neighbourhood of Christchurch, but was prevented from doing so by the huge and exorbitant prices required by the owners. The land was wanted for the people employed in the city, so that they might have an opportunity to make homes for themselves in the suburbs. I do not object to that in any way; but what I want to do is this: I want to compare that with the treatment accorded to the people of Auckland. The people there do not want the Minister to purchase land at extravagant prices, because land can be obtained in the northern suburbs of Auckland at very low prices.

Mr. J. MCKENZIE.—I have received applications to purchase land there.

Mr. MASSEY.—What I was going to say is that they can get land in the northern suburbs at reasonable rates, and all they have wanted was that the trains should be run at reasonable times before and after the ordinary working-hours, so that the people could be carried backwards and forwards, to and from their work; and then they would be satisfied. But they cannot get even that. I hope, seeing that the Minister is prepared to do so much for Christchurch, he will also see his way to do a little for Auckland. Now, with regard to the Bill. What I object to more than anything else in the Bill—more than taking the land compulsorily as proposed—is the proposal to borrow large sums of money in England for the purchase of lands in the colony. The Hon. the Minister must remember that, if we borrow money from the English capitalists, and purchase land with it, then those English capitalists become, to all intents and purposes, the owners of a portion of the lands of the colony, as we have got to remit the interest on the money borrowed for all time, unless we pay off the principal, and that, I am afraid, we shall never be in a position to do. The borrowing of £250,000, the sum it is proposed to spend, with the money at 4 per cent., will mean that we shall have to send away £10,000 per annum; but taking the whole amount—namely, £1,250,000—it will mean that we shall have to send away £50,000. I am afraid honourable members do not realise how difficult it is to raise £50,000 when the money has to be taken from the earnings of the people. I am afraid that we are entering upon another borrowing-period with a very light heart. We talk about hundreds of thousands, and even millions, as if we could get them for the asking. But the time will come when we shall not be able to get money for the asking, when we shall not be able to borrow, and when we shall have to pay interest out of revenue; and when that time comes we shall probably think more

Mr. Buchanan

of thousands than we do of millions at the present time. I still think we should have done without borrowing in this wholesale way. I think it would be better to go on quietly, and develop our resources, and let things find their own level. I shall support the amendment, with the object of checking, as much as possible, this borrowing policy.

Sir R. STOUT.—Sir, I do not wish to discuss this matter at any length. I only just wish to put the Minister of Education right in what he said in reference to the Land for Settlements Bill of 1891. I understood him to say that the reason why the Land for Settlements Bill has not the purchasing clause is that, when the Bill was sent to the Legislative Council with the perpetual clause in it, it was sent back from the Council with the purchasing clause added. That is entirely incorrect. It was never sent back from the Legislative Council with the purchasing clause in it at all. The Bill was ordered to be read the second time that day six months, so that it never came back to this House at all. Therefore his statement about this purchasing clause having been inserted is quite incorrect.

Mr. J. MCKENZIE.—He was referring to the Land Bill.

Sir R. STOUT.—Then, that is true. The two Bills are quite distinct. There might be a reason why the State might deal differently with lands acquired by the State from the way it deals with Crown lands. The only other point that I wish to touch on just now is the amendment of the honourable member for Wellington City (Mr. Bell). I do not think that the House, judging from some of the speeches made, appreciates the point which the honourable gentleman wishes to make. It is this: He does not ask that the borrowing-powers for five years be limited. It is to be a quarter of a million a year. I do not agree with that; I think it should be limited. But what the amendment asks is that the Minister should not be able to anticipate in the first year or in the second year the whole of the money that would be borrowed for five years. Altogether there is one million and a quarter authorised to be borrowed, but from the way in which this Bill is framed the Minister can get contracts for the whole million and a quarter within the first six months. I do not think that is right, and there is power to do that in the Bill. I do not see why the Minister—

Mr. J. MCKENZIE.—Why is it not in the Bill?

Sir R. STOUT.—That is the very point; it is not in the Bill. If the Minister does not object to have this power limited he need not object to have the matter defined. Surely it is not fair to say that the Minister should make a contract now for the whole million and a quarter, if he likes, within the next month, while in the next five years whoever might be the Minister of Lands would not be allowed to exercise any purchasing-power at all. The whole thing would be taken from him. I do not think it is a fair thing to put in the Land

for Settlements Bill, and I cannot see why objection should be taken to the amendment proposed by the honourable member for Wellington City (Mr. Bell). It has been said that this matter has already been dealt with in Committee. I say it has not been dealt with in Committee. I, for one, did not observe it until it was pointed out to me by the honourable member for Wellington City. I do not know a single member who noticed it or referred to it. I hope, therefore, the honourable gentleman will see his way to get the Bill recommitted. It would not take five minutes to put the matter right, and I feel sure it would be a proper amendment to make.

Mr. G. J. SMITH.—I should like to ask the Minister, in reference to this amendment, whether he will take the opinion of the Law Officers of the Crown on the point, and, if their opinion coincides with that of the honourable member for Wellington City, whether he will agree to have the amendment put in in another place.

An Hon. MEMBER.—You cannot make it in another place.

Mr. TANNER.—I should like to say a few words on the third reading of this Bill in order to express my approval of its general aim, and not because there is any need for me to justify my action, for I have always been endeavouring to secure the principle embodied in this Bill. It has always been a much-cherished object of my presence here to get the principle of public acquisition of private lands confirmed in this House, and carried into practical effect. No doubt there are members on the other side of the House, and probably some on this side, who consider that I have displayed a somewhat extreme attitude. If that has been shown, the reason is to be found in the manifest evils of land-occupation in the South Island, and more particularly in the Province of Canterbury, and may be regarded as another instance of a long-continued and growing evil which has been gradually bringing about in the public mind that inevitable revolution of feeling which eventually ends in curing the evil itself. I shall not endeavour to describe the state of things which prevailed in Canterbury during the three decades that succeeded its settlement. That has been too often described in this House, and it is too well worn a theme, I am afraid, to be dilated upon at the present time. It is sufficient for me to say that in a province with a population of about a hundred and twenty or a hundred and thirty thousand, and capable of carrying, in all probability, a couple of millions of people, during the time I refer to the lands of the province passed rapidly away out of the hands of the public. Nearly the whole of the lands have now gone, with the exception of remnants that are unmentionable for our present purpose. It was in the fifties and sixties that the present evil was created; and social and industrial stagnation has been largely brought about in the province by the fact that land was practically closed to the growing generation, and to such an extent that during the latter half

of the last decade public opinion was turned in the direction of seeking some remedy for the evil which had practically paralysed the province. Throughout the province, and extending beyond it to other parts of the colony, particularly during the term of the Administration which came into office in 1887, this feeling had been growing up. The accumulation and monopoly of land by private owners had become a national evil at that time, and it was seen that the Administration had not the courage or the skill to grapple with it. Instead of taking the opportunity when the opportunity came, and giving themselves, as they might have done, another lease of life politically by meeting popular requirements, they damped the best feelings and wishes of the population of Canterbury by their stoppage of the special village-settlement scheme; and when Crown lands fell into their hands the system they adopted of re-leasing for twenty-one years, and the manner in which they disposed of it, was such that they brought about a general feeling of indignation throughout the whole of Canterbury against that Administration. It is not necessary for me to recall some of the events which have passed, more than to simply mention the disposal of the 20,600 acres of the Station Peaks property, and the manner in which the famous, or infamous, transaction took place with regard to the 20,000 acres of Run 28, and the 11,880 acres of Run 28A, Otakaiki. These were incidents among others of the policy then pursued; and the census of 1891 showed the result: namely, between the years 1886 and 1891 the finest province of this Colony of New Zealand showed an increase of population of no more than seven thousand persons in a total of about a hundred and twenty-eight thousand or a hundred and thirty thousand. The best and most enterprising and speculative of her children who were able to move from the province moved off in order to find a field for their energies; and at this moment no Canterbury man can visit a settlement anywhere between Taranaki and Napier without encountering some of his fellow provincialists who have been pressed out of the province of their adoption, or, in many cases, the province of their birth. It was well that men should leave one province for another within the limits of the colony, although that meant building up districts in one Island at the expense of provinces in the other, rather than abandon New Zealand altogether; but thousands took even this extreme step. So marked was the migration northwards that the Provincial District of Wellington increased its population in about six times the ratio which the Province of Canterbury did. The total increase in the Province of Canterbury during the years I have mentioned was very little more than the increase in the population of the little Province of Taranaki. It was beyond human endurance that the state of things which prevailed with one Administration after another, and which culminated in the manner I have described, should any longer be tolerated. Nearly all

Mr. Tanner

the industrial population rose in revolt against such administration, and the verdict which they then pronounced was reiterated with tremendous emphasis three years later—namely, last year—and the result is, at this moment, from that Province of Canterbury there is not one single representative who sits on yonder side of the House, nor is there likely to be. Canterbury prefers to be represented by men who voice the general desire for extended settlement within her own boundaries. It is objected to this Bill that it is our duty to spread our population over the whole colony before attempting close settlement in one part of it. I fail to see how a proposal of that kind is to commend itself to the people of the colony. If there is any meaning in it, it means that the whole colony must first be rendered accessible to our population, which, in other words, means that the entire cost of roading and providing means of communication throughout the colony must be borne by the men of the first and second generations. We are then charged with indifference to the feelings of owners. I will not use the *tu quoque* argument, for I have no wish to initiate anything in the nature of social warfare in the colony, but we must set humanitarian and patriotic aims first, and I hold it is our duty to provide against the expatriation of thousands of our fellow-colonists, even by the just and partial expropriation of a few owners, for we are resolute in our determination to afford something in the nature of "equality of opportunity" to our would-be cultivators. I have one more word to say. During the divisions which took place in Committee I took a part which I have no need to justify—my conduct is my own justification. I voted in favour of the perpetual lease as against the eternal lease. If it was necessary to repeat that vote to-morrow, even on strict party lines, I should be found repeating that vote; but I probably should not trouble to record a vote on a merely academical discussion. I told my people that I was thoroughly of opinion that the unearned increment, whatever that may be, be it large or small, immediate or delayed, should be in the hands of the State. I am prepared to sanction very liberal and long terms of leases—that is, I would readily sanction a fifty years' lease, provided we gave the right of revaluation at the end of the term; I am also very anxious to give every legitimate assistance which can be given to settlers; but I am bitterly opposed to the principle laid down in the eternal lease, for it is a far cry to a time 999 years hence, and whenever an opportunity is afforded me in this House I shall record my vote against it.

Mr. G. HUTCHISON.—This debate on the third reading of the Land for Settlements Bill has been interesting in certain developments, and has, I believe, a meaning and importance that ought to be noticed throughout the colony. I ask the House to bear in mind that the Premier, speaking from his place to-night, referred to the principle of the Bill as being that of the compulsory taking of land for settlement; and he referred to another part of

the Bill—that with reference to the tenure under which the land to be acquired is to be dealt with—as being something which might be settled afterwards. I should say that I agree entirely with the Premier that the principle of the Bill is the compulsory taking of land for settlement, for in that respect it is distinctly different from the other subject as to how land so taken should be dealt with—a subject already determined by the legislation on our statute-book; yet I find that in this Bill, as an integral part, is the method of dealing with the land—dealing with it under the tenure known as the lease in perpetuity. It has been a matter of some curiosity to myself, and possibly to some others, how it has been managed, in a House the majority of which, I believe, are pledged against the lease in perpetuity, that clause 20, which deals with the tenure, has been allowed to pass this Chamber. Is it to be treated as an essential part of the Bill? My honourable friend the Minister of Lands does not answer.

Mr. J. MCKENZIE.—You know very well.

Mr. G. HUTCHISON.—I do know very well that from my honourable friend's point of view the tenure is an essential part of the Bill; but the Premier will have it that it is not—or he says that it is not; and it is by insisting it is not that the Premier has beguiled a great many honourable gentlemen, who usually follow him, into turning their backs upon their own principles. The honourable member for Avon, the honourable member for Nelson City, and some others whom I might mention, voted against this clause a few nights ago, and they deserve honourable mention amongst the constituencies of the colony for so doing. With the exception of the honourable member for Wellington City (Mr. Bell), the majority that passed the clause affirming the tenure included the whole of the Opposition. I mean that Mr. Bell was the only member of the Opposition, as it is styled, who voted against this clause. There were some few others, ranked as members of the Opposition, who had paired against it, myself amongst the number. The rest of the eleven who constituted the minority that endeavoured to reject the clause were members who were usually considered supporters of the Government. The large majority of three to one that carried the clause was made up of a few members of the Opposition and a large number of members from the other side, and yet I believe it to be a fact beyond any dispute that the majority of members on the other side are against this lease in perpetuity.

An Hon. MEMBER.—No.

Mr. G. HUTCHISON.—This is a matter which will not bear contradiction: that the majority of the supporters of the Government are pledged against the lease in perpetuity.

An Hon. MEMBER.—Not half of them.

Mr. G. HUTCHISON.—I assume it as a fact. Time will show whether I am right or wrong; but I repeat again that a majority of the supporters of the Government are pledged against

the lease in perpetuity, and yet have voted for it. How has that been done? I hope I shall not be trenching on forbidden ground, or divulging any confidences, if I refer to what is ordinarily known as the caucus of last week. If the Bill as it stood was the Bill which the colony approved of at the last general election, there was surely no need of a caucus or compact, and yet we find a caucus was convened, and that some sort of compact was entered into. It may be that the reports in the newspapers are not authentic. I will not depend on them. I will take the Ministerial statements to-night. I will take first the statement of the Premier. It was to the effect that the principle of the Bill was the compulsory taking of land for settlement. I will next take the statement of the Minister of Lands, which was to the effect that it was necessary, for the purpose of getting this Bill passed through another place, that there should be no material alteration in it. That could only be justified if it were a fact that the Bill represents the public opinion which the colony expressed at the last general election, and I again assert that it does not in so far as the tenure under the Bill is concerned. However, the majority of Government supporters resolved, after explanations at this caucus, to support the Bill as it stands. The plea was that if altered it was in danger of being lost in the Council. I say the premiss is not sound. I say the Bill has a lie on the face of it in respect of clause 20. Leave out clause 20 and I say the Bill is right. It would then affirm the principle of compulsory taking of land for the necessary purposes of settlement, and ought to be passed. Why, then, insist on clause 20? Why should there be any reference to a particular but contested tenure at all in the Bill if the distinctive principle be the compulsory taking of land for settlement? The true explanation is that my honourable friend the Minister of Lands insists on the lease in perpetuity as the future and only tenure in the colony. Leave clause 20 in, and either the majority on the Government side are representing the opinion of the country in reaffirming this tenure—in which case they should support the Bill unreservedly; or else they are misrepresenting the feeling of the country in stipulating for a change—in which case they should reject the clause. I believe the real fact is that a promise has been given to the Government supporters that an opportunity shall be afforded them of taking a vote upon the question whether or not there should be periodic revaluations in connection with the lease in perpetuity. If that be so—and I challenge my honourable friend the Minister of Lands to deny it—then this Bill is not the pronounced will of the people or of their representatives in Parliament. There is in their support a qualification and a reservation, and I say that the plea fails which has been put forward as the justification for passing the Bill as it is so as to insure its acceptance by the Legislative Council.

An Hon. MEMBER.—Are you in favour of the Bill?

Mr. G. HUTCHISON.—I am in favour of the principle of the Bill, but I am dead against the lease in perpetuity.

An Hon. MEMBER.—Why did you try to kill the Bill last year?

Mr. G. HUTCHISON.—I did not try to kill the Bill last year. I tried to get safeguards introduced into the Bill. My desire is that the lease in perpetuity be excised from this Bill.

An Hon. MEMBER.—And the freehold put in?

Mr. G. HUTCHISON.—No; I do not want the freehold put in. I leave that question over for the present. That is not the question before us now. I say the lease in perpetuity is a false note in this Bill, and that it has been passed by a majority of the House under a promise which invalidates the plea that the Bill should be passed in its entirety so as to prevent rejection in another place. With the knowledge of the reservation implied by the promise of the question of revaluations being left open, the whole virtue of the plea goes. And remember that if that be so the Legislative Council may, with perfect impunity, throw out the Bill, because it does not express the will of the people as expressed at the last general election. This is a very serious

12.0. matter. Are members content with the promise of the Minister of Lands that an opportunity shall be given to bring down in some vague way an amending measure? Are they content with a chance of change. When is my honourable friend the Minister of Lands going to give the opportunity of effecting that change? And if he does bring down an amending Act introducing revaluation—periodical revaluation—is he going to support it? Not for a moment. The whole thing is a deceit. I thought at one time of moving to recommit this Bill in respect of clause 20; but I am quite convinced that it would be of no use. It would, however, be a very proper thing for some member on the other side to do so. It is they who are chiefly concerned. They have voted for this Bill with the lease in perpetuity in it against their own convictions, and against the public opinion of the colony, and they have done it, as I understand, on the promise that the Minister of Lands will give an early opportunity to the House to decide as to periodic revaluations. I ask my honourable friend, in reply, to say if that be true—if he has given such a promise, or any promise to that effect.

Mr. J. McKENZIE.—I will tell you in my reply.

Mr. G. HUTCHISON.—I feel convinced my honourable friend will not give an opportunity to deal with this most vital question if he once gets this Bill passed. In his reply, I would ask him to say whether he has given any promise of the kind; and, if so, when he is going to give effect to it—this session, or next session, or never. Probably never; because I thoroughly believe my honourable friend is wedded to this lease in perpetuity, which is nothing better than a freehold with the purchase-money lent on mortgage perpetually at 5 per cent., but without any right

of redemption, thus introducing an element of unrest and revolution into the land-administration of the colony. However, if some independent member on the other side will not move an amendment the country will certainly hear of it afterwards.

An Hon. MEMBER.—We have tried it already.

Mr. G. HUTCHISON.—I understand it has been tried, but tried under circumstances which left it no opportunity of being dealt with fairly,—under circumstances of secrecy and pressure, when the majority were cajoled into agreeing to affirm the principle of compulsory taking, but with this objectionable tenure tacked on, under the plea that the Legislative Council might be expected to reject the Bill if altered in any material part; and I have pointed out that the Legislative Council will be perfectly justified in rejecting the Bill with the lease in perpetuity in it, because any one who knows anything of public opinion must know that the lease in perpetuity has been condemned throughout the colony. That is the position. Well, if honourable members on the other side will not move to recommit the Bill, so that clause 20 may be excised, then the concern is not mine. But I do ask them, what are they afraid of? Surely they are not afraid of the Opposition, who are in numbers so meagre that they could not seriously contemplate carrying on the business of the country for a single hour. The majority on the other side are strong enough to impose their will upon the Government. Why do they allow themselves to be coerced? Why is it? Is it the bullying of the Premier that is driving them against their consciences in this matter? I hope not.

Mr. J. McKENZIE.—It is not cunning.

Mr. G. HUTCHISON.—No; but I think the revolt against such surrender of principle cannot be far distant. When we find members of Parliament are coerced or seduced,—if the word offends some honourable members I can use some other,—deceived, then, into doing violence to their own convictions on an important question of this character, we are forced to conclude that true and honourable legislation is not desired. I, in conclusion, ask my honourable friend the Minister of Lands to say, in his reply, when he is going to deal with this question, and how.

The House divided on the question, "That the words 'be now read a third time' stand part of the question."

AYES, 40.

Buddo	Hogg	McKenzie, R.
Buick	Houston	McNab
Cadman	Joyce	Meredith
Carnecross	Kelly, J. W.	Mills
Carroll	Kelly, W.	Newman
Collins	Larnach	Parata
Duncan	Lawry	Pirani
Graham	Mackintosh	Reeves
Hall	Maslin	Russell, G. W.
Hall-Jones	McGowan	Saunders
Harris	McKenzie, J.	Seddon

Smith, E. M.	Tanner	<i>Tellers.</i>
Smith, G. J.	Willis.	Morrison
Stevens		Pinkerton.

NOES, 13.

Buchanan	Lang	Wilson.
Crowther	Mackenzie, T.	
Earnshaw	Massey	<i>Tellers.</i>
Heke	McGuire	Bell
Hutchison, G.	Stout.	Fraser.

PAIRS.

<i>For.</i>	<i>Against.</i>
Flatman	Green
Guinness	Button
Hutchison, W.	Duthie
McLachlan	Te Ao
Millar	Pere
Montgomery	Mitchelson
O'Regan	Allen
Steward	Thompson
Ward.	Russell, W. R.

Majority for, 27.

Amendment negatived.

Mr. J. McKENZIE.—Sir, I never supposed when I moved the third reading of this Bill that it would be so late when I should have to reply. However, I am sure I shall be consulting the convenience of honourable members if I now make my remarks as short as possible, and in doing so I shall also be consulting my own convenience, because I feel I am physically unable, at this late hour, to do justice to the motion we have before us. However, I have asked myself two or three times the question how many members in this House are really in favour of the Bill, and the division which has taken place has shown me who are the members who agree with the whole Bill as it is at present, and who they are who believe in the principle of the Bill and intend that it should be placed on the statute-book. Now, Sir, I will refer to a few of the arguments used against the Bill to-night. And first let me dispose of the argument used by the honourable member for Wellington City (Sir R. Stout) and the honourable member for Riccarton (Mr. G. W. Russell) in connection with the past legislation on this subject. The honourable member for Riccarton and also the honourable member for Wellington City asked why we did not bring down the Bill of 1891. I brought down the Land Bill in 1891, but the Bill of 1891 was not passed, as we could not get it through the House. I brought down the Bill again in 1892, in an amended form, when the late Mr. Ballance was Premier, and he advised me to bring down the measure in the form in which it is at present, as it was better to have such a Bill than no Bill at all. That was the opinion he held, and that was the reason we departed from the Bill of 1891. Now let us come to the question of the eternal lease; and I wish to refer to this because I am sure there are some members in this House who do not know the history of what has taken place in connection with this particular lease. The Land Bill of 1891 provided for a perpetual lease of thirty-one

years. That Bill was rejected, and did not become law, and I then, in 1892, brought down a Bill with a fifty years' lease in it, and provided for a revaluation every fifty years. Now, the honourable gentleman opposite was one of those who supported the amendment moved on the floor of this House on the Bill going into Committee, which amendment my chief and colleague, Mr. Ballance, made a Government question. I think it would be well that I should read the amendment to honourable members, because it is quite evident that a great many members of this House do not know the facts of this matter. The amendment moved by the honourable member for Rangitikei (Mr. Bruce) on that occasion was in these words:—

"That, while, in the opinion of this House, the Land Bill contains some useful amendments in the existing law, and should at an early date be read a second time, this House considers that the extent to which the Bill aims at restricting the freehold tenure is unsatisfactory, and calculated to be injurious to the best interests of settlement."

My chief, Mr. Ballance, then got up in his place and asked the leader of the Opposition if he was in favour of the amendment, because, if he were, then he (Mr. Ballance) would make it a Government question. Mr. Rolleston's answer was a brief one: "I agree with the amendment entirely." That was the amendment moved on the occasion. To defeat that amendment I, at the request of my chief and colleague, introduced the lease in perpetuity. Honourable members will recollect what the position of the Government was—namely, we were unable to carry the Land Bill through after such an alteration. And, Sir, let me tell honourable members this: that on three different occasions the perpetual lease with the right of revaluation was carried in this House. On three different occasions it was carried, and on three different occasions it was swept away, and every one of those leases granted, which, under the present law, might have been freehold. What, then, is the use at the present time of our running away with the shadow and letting the substance go? because that is what it is: it is simply chasing a shadow that we have at the present time no chance of establishing in New Zealand. I say the position of this colony is not ripe for this change, and what is the use of honourable members talking about this subject when they know perfectly well it is an impossibility to carry it into force at the present time? I know very well that members who support the Government on this side have stated that they were in favour of the perpetual lease—that they would go into the lobby against the Government, and with the Opposition; no matter what the consequences might be, they would have sufficient votes to carry the perpetual lease, even if the Government went off those benches; and they suppose they would get the perpetual lease if that happened. If they do they are making a very great mistake.

Hon. MEMBERS.—No, no.

Mr. J. McKENZIE.—That is the position, and no one can deny it. Let me tell the House, still further, that I was as much in favour of the perpetual lease as any honourable gentleman on this side of the House; and I myself, with the honourable member for Oamaru and the Premier, and one or two more members of this House, left our own party and went with Mr. Rolleston into the lobby, and carried the first perpetual lease ever carried in this colony. That was when the perpetual lease was considered the right thing; but the right of freehold was given by his own party afterwards, so that it destroyed the perpetual lease. What I stated before I am prepared to state now: that is, if there are a majority in this House in favour of the perpetual lease it is their duty to bring this question formally before the House, not in any half-and-half way. Let us have a motion tabled in this House that no land shall be disposed of in the Colony of New Zealand except by perpetual lease, and with a revaluation, and let us stand by the decision of this House. If this is done, we shall then see what members will vote for it and who will vote against it, on the straight issue.

Mr. G. HUTCHISON.—Are you going to introduce a resolution as to revaluation?

Mr. J. McKENZIE.—I do not intend to go into the history of this lease any further to-night, because I think it is useless to do so, as the question has already been fully dealt with by honourable members; but I will read the opinion expressed by Mr. Ballance when speaking on this question. A long discussion took place on this subject at the time that the amendment was proposed, and he used these words: "Then, as to the Bill itself, my honourable friend the Minister of Lands recognises that the time has not come for confining himself entirely to the perpetual lease." That was the opinion of Mr. Ballance on that occasion, and honourable members who were here at the time must know everything that occurred in connection with the subject. Now, we have on the statute-book at present the Bill of 1892, and honourable members will find from the remarks made on that occasion that that Bill was brought in and carried through the House with the full concurrence of my late chief and colleague, Mr. Ballance. There are one or two other remarks that I should like to refer to: and first, with regard to the honourable member for Christchurch City (Mr. Smith). He deplored the fact that the passage of this Bill had been made a party question. Well, I do not think that any party ties troubled that honourable gentleman in any way in his action in connection with this Bill. He voted as he thought fit and proper upon it, with the senior member for Wellington City, who sits beside him. During the time that I was that honourable gentleman's Whip I kept the Government in office very nearly a whole session with two only of a majority: that was after very careful whipping. If the honourable member for Christchurch City had then been in the House, I should always have

had his name on my Whip's card under the letter "D"; and I think that in future, so far as I can judge, the Whip is likely to have him marked in this way. The honourable gentleman went on, still further, to deplore the fact that we should have legislation of this sort introduced into the House. Supposing the first day of the session I asked each member of the House if he were in favour of a compulsory Bill of this sort, and to put his views in writing: What would be the result? I think it would be a difficult matter to put into shape a Bill with the views of each, and to carry the same through this House. Would such a Bill give satisfaction to a majority of the people of this colony? Then, there is another stage in regard to this Bill, that is, the Upper House; and I venture to say that if the Bill came back from the Upper House with all the amendments which have been rejected in this House put in by the Upper House, the members of this House would not accept the Bill with those amendments. All I have to do, and all any Minister has to do, is to try to legislate in such a way as to give satisfaction to the majority and in the best interests of the colony. All legislation must, to a certain extent, be a matter of compromise, and no one individual should stand in the way, and no two or three individuals should stand in the way and say they will not support the Bill unless they get their views put into it. The only thing we can do from time to time is to get such legislation as the House will agree to, and that the country will approve of. I venture to say that the country will approve of this Bill, and that the Bill will give full satisfaction to the settlers, and that those dire calamities prophesied as certain to happen if this Bill becomes law will not happen or even partly come to pass. We were told by the senior member for Wellington City that this Bill would have a far-reaching effect; and I admit it will have a far-reaching effect, and a farther reaching effect than any Bill ever passed in this country. I venture to say that if it becomes law it will be copied in every British colony. What will be the effect if this Bill is passed through this House, and becomes law in New Zealand? You will have every British colony under the Crown following in the same direction; and I venture to say that some day the people of Great Britain will have to do the same, and will take those large estates held in the Old Country and throw them open for settlement purposes, in the same way that we are doing in New Zealand over the Crown grant at the present time. The people of the world are getting more enlightened every day, and they are not going to tolerate one or two individuals holding millions of acres of land for their own benefit while hundreds and thousands of their fellow-creatures are starving. This is the far-reaching effect that this Bill will have: and I believe the effect in the Colony of New Zealand will be to throw open the large areas of land now lying idle at the present time, and that they will be brought into a state of cultivation and produc-

tion—a state they are not in at the present time. The honourable member for Wellington City (Sir R. Stout) said this Bill did not mean close settlement, for 640 acres of first-class land, and 5,000 acres of pastoral land could be disposed of in one lot; but he should have said that this was the maximum or outside limit, and also that the land could be cut up even into quarter-acre areas under this Bill. Sir, did I not bring down an amendment, after the Bill had passed its second reading and the Waste Lands Committee, providing that the Government should be authorised to take the whole of an estate if they took a portion of it?

12.30. And was that not done to meet those honourable gentlemen opposite, who said we would give no consideration to this matter at all? I gave every consideration I thought fair and just to the demands made by the honourable gentlemen opposite. And that was one of the demands; and I say, myself, it is only fair and reasonable that if you take a portion of a man's estate you should be prepared to take the whole of it; and if you do that, as was pointed out by my honourable colleague Mr. Reeves, you must deal with an estate as you find it, and you will not find the whole of these estates fit to be cut up into small sections. Let me quote an example of this to the honourable member for Riccarton. Take Glenmark, held by Mr. Moore, who is willing to sell to the Government. Take five hundred acres of Glenmark, and put a hundred settlers on the areas which he thinks would be advisable—that would mean about a hundred acres each. What would take place? Where is work to be found for a hundred such settlers? They would be miles away from other settlements, and what would working-men do there? They could find no employment, and they would go to some other part of the country to find employment. But take the whole of that estate and cut it up into decent-sized areas, and have village settlers there at the same time, and you would provide work on the estate for village settlers; because you could induce men of capital to go on the estate, to bring money there to build houses, to fence, and to cultivate the land, and employ those men whom you put on small settlements. Any settlement to be successful in New Zealand must have the two things combined. Then, it is of no use saying that under this Bill you must have small settlements only. If settlement is to be a success, you must have both things combined. You must bring men of capital upon these estates, who would employ those men who cannot afford to take up large areas. You must have both elements to make settlement successful. It is of no use talking about Cheviot. There are sixty-six village settlers there now, and, when the roads are finished, where are you to find employment for them, unless you have settlers with money on that estate? I am not going to put any more village settlers there till I see how the labour of these sixty-six village settlers will be absorbed. All these things must be a question of administration; and I venture

to say that if the honourable gentleman will look at it from that point of view he will say that my administration has been in that direction. Now, we are told that the question was not put on the Liberal platform last session that we were going to cut up big estates into large farms. I say that on every platform I gave expression to the same opinions I am expressing now on the floor of this House; and I venture to say that many other members who have been sent here were so sent here for expressing the same opinions during the election. Now, with regard to the assertion that all good Liberals should support the perpetual lease, does the honourable member for Christchurch City (Mr. Smith) imagine that he is a better Liberal than the honourable member for Oamaru? The honourable member for Oamaru has been thirteen years a member of this House, and the proof of his Liberalism is that he is sent here every time he presents himself for election. Notwithstanding the fact that there is a difference of opinion with regard to the nature of the tenure, do you mean to say that every man who is in favour of the lease in perpetuity is not a Liberal? He may be a Liberal without agreeing with it, but the honourable member for Oamaru is as good a Liberal as any man in this House; and what I say is this: that if the honourable member for Christchurch City stands the test for thirteen years as well as the honourable member for Oamaru has stood it, he will do very well. Now, we have been asked, "Will the Minister of Lands bring down a Fair Rent Bill—a taxing Bill, a lessees-taxing Bill, and so on?" I have stated already that during the recess I will make inquiries and see whether a Fair Rent Bill could be made to give satisfaction to the people. But do not misunderstand this question. When that question comes before this House it will deal with the Crown lands, with the endowments, and also with private property. No Fair Rent Bill would be fair unless it did that. And will those honourable gentlemen who ask me to bring it down support it when it is applied to private individuals. They will support it as long only as it applies to the Crown lands. That is all fair game in their eyes. But take the tenants of private individuals in the country. Are these tenants to be paying the highest rents, and at the same time finding the taxes to carry on the government of the country, while the Government are giving redress to their tenants, reducing their rents? Will it not be fair for the tenants of freeholders to ask that the same justice be done to them as is done to the tenants of the Crown? Perhaps I may be able to meet the honourable gentleman opposite with a Fair Rent Bill sooner than he expects, and I hope I shall have him as a warm supporter of that measure. I am very doubtful, however, of the honourable gentleman. Then, we have heard a great deal about the unearned increment—and it appears this is only to apply to people who take up land under the Land for Settlements Bill. Now, you will have to pay at the present time the full value for

estates purchased under this Bill. The unearned increment, I think, in most cases, will have to be paid for by the State before people get it at all.

An Hon. MEMBER.—No such thing.

Mr. J. McKENZIE.—We shall have to pay the full value of the land at the present time, and, if there is any unearned increment in it at the present time, then we shall have to pay for it, and the argument of these honourable gentlemen goes to the wind. And, then, the tenant will have to pay interest on the unearned increment. Why should these people, and these people alone, be singled out? Why not fall back on the freeholders and say, "Let us have the unearned increment of your land which you have bought in the past"?

Mr. O'REGAN.—Hear, hear.

Mr. J. McKENZIE.—My honourable friend the member for Inangahua says "Hear, hear"; but let him bring down his Single-tax Bill. Let us see the clauses of that Bill, and the machinery for working it.

Mr. O'REGAN.—It will contain one clause.

Mr. J. McKENZIE.—If the honourable member thinks he will carry a measure of one clause he is very much mistaken. I venture to say that, if it took me three nights to pass this Bill through Committee, he would have twenty-three nights taken up in passing his. Then, we are told that all the land should be bought by a judicial body. I venture to say that if you appoint a judicial body to buy land you would never want £20 of this £250,000, because they would do nothing. The Minister of Lands, knowing the requirements of settlement, must put the machinery in motion; and, if you keep him out of it altogether, and buy through this body, how are these gentlemen going to do their work, I should like to know? I venture to say that such a Bill would be in favour of the big estates remaining as they are for many years to come. Then, we are told that all sorts of charges will be made against the Minister if this Bill becomes law. If you try to point out any more or graver charges that can possibly be brought against me than have already been brought against me by the Press of the colony I am sure you will find it very hard work. If I am half as bad as the newspapers represent me to be I should have been in gaol long ago. Then, Sir, for want of time, I must pass by the other honourable member for Wellington City (Mr. Bell). He said we did not give any fair opportunity for properly considering this measure. Now, this Bill was discussed for several days on the second reading. A number of amendments were put on the Order Paper which it was open for him to see; and the motion of the honourable member for Palmerston was for several days on the Order Paper. Why did not the honourable gentleman look up the Order Paper? Why did he, at the last moment, ask for a postponement of the Bill in order that this amendment should be considered, saying that I should have given more time to consider this Bill? We have had two long nights in putting this Bill through Committee, and every member had a full op-

portunity of discussing it, and of considering every amendment; and we could not have done more if we had kept members at it for a week. I have any amount of notes, but I have heard the bell, and I think I have said enough for the time being.

Mr. BUCHANAN.—What about the promise?

Mr. J. McKENZIE.—The promise I made was that I would consider the subject, and ask the advice of the Law Officers. I did so, and was told that to put that clause in the Bill would hamper it and make it worthless. I was told that, if it was of any value at all, it would hamper the Commissioners from doing what they would need to do for effective work. I hope the third reading will be passed, and that the Bill will be passed in another place; and, if so, I venture to say that any member who supports it will have no cause to regret it.

Mr. BELL.—I should like to say one word by way of personal explanation. The honourable gentleman misunderstood me. He understood me to say that I was not able to discuss the amendment of the honourable member for Palmerston because I had not seen and considered it. The honourable gentleman misunderstood me.

Mr. J. McKENZIE.—I did not say that. I said the honourable gentleman had full opportunity of seeing the amendment. There was no reason why he should not have considered the amendments, as he had full opportunity of seeing and discussing them when the House was in Committee.

Mr. BELL.—That is my right. My personal explanation is that I did not make the complaint the honourable gentleman thinks I did. I made this complaint: that at that late hour of the morning it was not possible to hold a discussion on such an important amendment.

Bill read a third time.

The House adjourned at a quarter to one o'clock a.m.

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

Wednesday, 22nd August, 1894.

First Reading—Second Reading—Fire and Marine Insurance Companies—Pensions paid outside of the Colony—Divorce and Matrimonial Causes Bill—Companies' Accounts Audit Bill.

The Hon. the SPEAKER took the chair at half-past two o'clock.

PRAYERS.

FIRST READING.

Land for Settlements Bill.

SECOND READING.

Levels County Bill.

FIRE AND MARINE INSURANCE COMPANIES.

The Hon. Mr. BONAR asked the Colonial Secretary, if he will lay on the table a return showing the amounts paid for income-tax by

Mr. J. McKensie

the British and local fire and marine insurance companies respectively for the years 1892 and 1893?

The Hon. Sir P. A. BUCKLEY had made inquiries of the Commissioner of Taxes in reference to this question, and that officer informed him that it was impossible for him to supply the information without violating his oath of secrecy regarding such matters.

PENSIONS PAID OUTSIDE OF THE COLONY.

On the motion of the Hon. Mr. JENNINGS, it was ordered, That a return be laid upon the table showing the amount paid annually by the New Zealand Government in pensions to persons residing out of this colony; names and amounts to be set forth in said return.

DIVORCE AND MATRIMONIAL CAUSES BILL.

The Hon. Mr. MACGREGOR moved, *That the Hon. the Speaker do leave the chair, in order that the Council may go into Committee on this Bill.*

The Hon. Sir G. S. WHITMORE moved, as an amendment, *That this Bill be committed this day three months.* He did so in order to save the time of the Council, and because since the Bill was first introduced by the honourable gentleman the proposals contained in it had been so universally repudiated throughout New Zealand by those persons who were most entitled to their respect. He need not go into the questions involved, further than simply to say that it was not the desire of the people of this country that this measure should become law. There had been some reasons advanced in favour of the clause relating to property which might not be objected to; but the extreme laxity of the Bill, and the large number of causes under which divorce might be obtained, made people look upon it with some suspicion, and, he thought, with some amount of fear. As far as his experience went, the passing of such a measure would very much prejudice the happy and social life of the country. Some of the proposals contained in the Bill honestly came within the category of the obligations of the parties contracting for better or for worse. With regard to adultery, he agreed that there were certain sentimental grounds on which adultery might be considered fair cause for divorce, but with regard to the other grounds he thought the provisions of the Bill were extremely lax, and should be regarded with a great deal of suspicion.

The Hon. Mr. McLEAN hoped such a course as that suggested by the honourable gentleman would not be taken with regard to this Bill. Whatever his honourable friend might think, he felt it was necessary to give the honourable gentleman in charge of the Bill an opportunity of getting it discussed in Committee. His honourable friend Sir George Whitmore should have taken it on the second reading. It was open to any honourable members to say in Committee whether they were prepared to go the length his honourable friend wished to go.

That was altogether another matter. But surely a matter of such consideration should be submitted and discussed fairly before the Committee. There were many people who objected to interfering at all with the question. There were others again who saw the necessity for it. It was only three days ago that a Judge remarked in Wellington, "What is the use of trying to make these two people live together?"

The Hon. Sir G. S. WHITMORE.—Why give them a divorce for nothing?

The Hon. Mr. McLEAN said the law was so stringent that they could not get a divorce, and therefore some consideration should be shown to these people, and especially to those women whose husbands deserted them for so long. It was not desirable that these women should be tied to husbands from whom they had never heard for over twenty years perhaps. He hoped, at all events, some consideration would be given to his honourable friend who had introduced the Bill, and that it would be fairly discussed before the Committee.

The Hon. Mr. KERR thought it was no reflection whatever on the honourable gentleman who introduced the Bill to make the proposition to the Council that the Bill should be committed that day six months. If members of the Council had made up their minds, as he had no doubt they had, on this question, instead of subjecting the Bill to a protracted illness before it died he preferred to see sudden death given to it. He was prepared to give it its quietus at once.

The Hon. W. DOWNIE STEWART said there was no doubt that this Bill was a very important one, and one upon which there was very strong feeling throughout the country. So far as he had been able to ascertain, there was very little feeling against the general policy of the Bill, and he was not sure that those who had expressed themselves as hostile to the Bill had very carefully considered it or quite understood its object. The Bill contained, no doubt, very radical alterations in what might be termed the substantive law; it also contained important machinery alterations in the present law. He agreed with his honourable friend Mr. McLean in thinking that these matters should be fairly discussed and considered in Committee, and, if they ultimately decided that the Bill should not proceed further, they could express that determination on the third reading. There was no doubt that any reform introduced in that branch of the law should be entered into very carefully, and with the utmost consideration in the interests of all parties. He should support the honourable gentleman in his motion to commit the Bill, as the measure entirely depended on the amendments or corrections that would be made in it.

The Hon. Mr. BONAR merely desired to say that he regarded the Bill as one of the most dangerous measures introduced in the Council, and he thought it would tend to upset the whole country. The changes proposed were of such an extremely radical character that he did not think they could be reasonably amended in Committee. If they were going to

allow divorce for all sorts of possible reasons, he thought it would be a very dangerous thing. If he thought the Bill could be reduced to anything like a reasonable measure in Committee, he would agree to its committal, but, on the whole, he considered it might be better to follow the Hon. Sir G. S. Whitmore in his amendment, so as to dispose of the matter at once, and allow those persons interested in the question to bring up some more moderate Bill before the Council at some future period. The matter required a great deal of consideration, and it should not be dealt with in any hurried manner.

The Hon. Mr. BOWEN was, unfortunately, not present when the Bill came up for its second reading. Since that time, however, he had had an opportunity of seeing what the honourable member who introduced the Bill had had to say in introducing it. He was bound to say that the honourable gentleman had introduced it with great moderation, and gave a great deal of information as to the reasons which induced him to bring it in. There was one point on which he entirely agreed with the honourable gentleman: he thought that a woman ought to be placed on the same footing as a man as regarded the question of adultery. But there was much more in the measure that he entirely disagreed with, especially the extreme latitude that was allowed for divorce for all sorts of minor reasons. He objected more especially to clause 4, which was a clause from the French Bill introduced by M. Naquet. They all knew very well that a judicial separation could be obtained with very great ease. All sorts of reasons could be adduced for judicial separation. Incompatibility of temper, and all sorts of things, led to judicial separation; and, if after three years it was within the power of either party to obtain a divorce simply on the ground that a judicial separation had been in operation, he thought that in many instances collusion would be the consequence of such legislation. Then, again, there were a variety of other reasons for divorce allowed in this Bill. No doubt there might be considerable hardship in some cases to one or other of the parties to an ill-assorted marriage; but they must look to the public good, and they knew perfectly well that there were a large number of disputes between married people which, when they had time to consider the matter, were made up afterwards, to the great benefit of the families, and especially the children. He thought that a very important thing for the Legislature to look to was the stability of the family system. Family was the basis on which society was founded, and anything they did to disturb unnecessarily the relations of the family, he considered, was a mischievous interference with the existing law. There were a great many points in this Bill which might be dealt with in Committee one by one; but he must say that his feeling, on the whole, was that there was only one point on which he agreed with the honourable gentleman who had brought in the Bill. He, for one, had not

had an opportunity of expressing his opinion before on the principle of the Bill, which ought to be particularly considered on the second reading. He took this motion to be practically a reconsideration of the second reading. He intended to record his vote against its going into Committee, and he would do so on the ground that the Bill was going too far altogether. Though he thought there were one or two amendments required in the law, he looked upon this Bill as an attack on society as at present constituted, and on family-life. It had been said, in discussing this measure, that the manners and customs of a country, and the feelings of its people, influenced its morality more than any legislation. This might be the case to a certain extent, but legislation had a great effect. He would take the case of America, for instance. In America there was a population of the same race as their own, and a population which was to a great extent living in the same circumstances; and what did they find there? Admittedly the change in the divorce law had led to the utmost relaxation in the system of morality and family-life of the United States. They heard repeated protests against the way in which marriages were entered into recklessly in the States now, because there was beginning to grow up a feeling that the marriage-tie could be cast off easily if it was found burdensome; and, as the law in one State differed from the law in another, there were many who took advantage of this difference by travelling from State to State to get rid of a husband or a wife, as the case might be. New Zealand was one State in a very large Empire setting up a law which had only been agreed to in two or three of the colonies—by no means in all of them. One of the greatest colonies of England objected to such a change—he meant Canada; and he thought this question ought to be dealt with in the interests of society at large, and after a study of what was the feeling of the whole English Empire in the matter of the marriage-laws. As he had said before, had this Bill been one to deal only with the one question, he himself would have been in favour of it; but, as it was, he would vote with the honourable gentleman who had moved that the Bill should be committed that day three months.

The Hon. Mr. OLIVER thought reasons given by some of the former speakers had been very good reasons for the Council going into Committee on the Bill. If any one expressed a desire to equalise the conditions under which men and their wives might obtain divorce because of adultery, it seemed to him that they were neglecting an opportunity of carrying out that desire by refusing to commit the Bill. The clauses were practically unconnected with each other. There was no real connection between the clause which indicated that any married person might obtain a divorce on the ground that the wife or the husband had been guilty of adultery and some of the other clauses to which strong objection had been taken. It appeared to him that they might very well permit this Bill to go into Committee, so that those

Hon. Mr. Bonar

of them who were disposed to approve of some clauses of the Bill might vote for them. He did not think any reason had been given for not going into Committee on the Bill.

The Council divided on the question, "That the words proposed to be omitted stand part of the question."

AYES, 18.

Barnicoat	McCullough	Pollen
Jenkinson	McLean	Rigg
Jennings	Montgomery	Shrimski
Kelly	Morris	Stevens
MacGregor	Oliver	Stewart
Mantell	Pharazyn	Swanson.

NOES, 15.

Acland	Dignan	Richardson
Baillie	Grace	Wahawaha
Bonar	Kerr	Walker, L.
Bowen	Ormond	Whitmore
Buckley	Reynolds	Williams.

Majority for, 3.

Amendment negatived, and Bill committed.

IN COMMITTEE.

The Hon. Mr. KERR moved to report progress.

The Committee divided.

AYES, 14.

Bonar	Grace	Wahawaha
Bowen	Kerr	Walker, L.
Buckley	Ormond	Whitmore
Dignan	Reynolds	Williams.
Feldwick	Richardson	

NOES, 18.

Acland	McCullough	Pollen
Barnicoat	McLean	Rigg
Holmes	Montgomery	Shrimski
Jenkinson	Morris	Stevens
Jennings	Oliver	Stewart
Kelly	Pharazyn	Swanson.

Majority against, 4.

Motion negatived.

Subsequently progress was reported.

COMPANIES' ACCOUNTS AUDIT BILL.

IN COMMITTEE.

Clause 3.—“(c.) If any officer or agent refuses to produce any such book or document, or to answer any question relating to the affairs of the company, he shall incur a penalty not exceeding five pounds in respect of each offence.”

The Hon. Mr. SHRIMSKI moved to insert the words “or imprisonment for a term not exceeding three months” after the word “pounds.”

The Committee divided on the question, “That the words proposed to be inserted be so inserted.”

AYES, 17.

Barnicoat	Kerr	Rigg
Bowen	MacGregor	Shrimski
Buckley	McCullough	Swanson
Dignan	Montgomery	Whitmore
Feldwick	Pharazyn	Williams.
Kelly	Richardson	

NOES, 8.

Acland	Ormond	Wahawaha
Bonar	Stevens	Walker, L.
Morris	Stewart	

Majority for, 9.

Amendment agreed to, and Bill reported.

The Council adjourned at a quarter to five o'clock p.m.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.

Wednesday, 22nd August, 1894.

First Readings—“Gallant Tip” Lease—W. Craig—Encouraging Arts and Industries—West Coast Water-race—Semi-political Meeting at Parliament Buildings—Natives not paying Dog-tax—Railways—School-books—Arowhenua Destitute—Rock-boring Machine—Semi-political Meeting in Parliament Buildings—Government Advertisements—Telephone Exchange Ladies—Civil Service—Elective Executive Bill.

Mr. SPEAKER took the chair at half-past two o'clock.

PRAYERS.

FIRST READINGS.

Counties Vehicle-licensing Bill, Supreme Court Practice and Procedure Bill.

“GALLANT TIP” LEASE.

On the motion of Mr. MITCHELSON, it was ordered, That the papers in connection with the cancellation of the “Gallant Tip” Lease, in the Lake Wakatipu district, be laid upon the table of the House.

W. CRAIG.

Mr. THOMPSON brought up the following report from the Waste Lands Committee on the petition of William Craig, and moved, That the report be referred to the Government for consideration:—

“This petition should be referred to the Government, the Waste Lands Committee being unanimous in the opinion that Mr. Craig should be placed in the same position regarding tenure of occupancy as Studholme; and that the Government be recommended to aid him in securing a lease to expire concurrently with Studholme's lease of Rangipopo-Murimotu Block.”

Mr. T. MACKENZIE would like to make a very few remarks in connection with this petition. The Waste Lands Committee went to considerable trouble in endeavouring to ascertain the position of this land. They found that Mr. Craig was in occupation of the land for some eleven years, and that previous to that he had negotiated, or endeavoured to negotiate, for a block of 6,000 acres. About that time Mr. Studholme was also negotiating for the same land, and Mr. Studholme at that time secured for himself the assistance of the then Ministry of the day in order to obtain some 40,000 acres of this block. Mr. Studholme had also, he believed, 110,000 acres adjacent to this block. From

the evidence it appeared that the Government, when they found that Mr. Studholme himself could not secure the land from the Natives, used their machinery, and passed an Act through this House, in 1882, enabling the Government to negotiate with the Natives, and then the Government passed the whole of this estate to Studholme. The Government now took the whole trouble of collecting the rent, taking upon themselves, as well, the labour of distributing the whole of the rentals among the Natives interested, and yet the Government did not receive one single penny in connection with it. On the other hand, they found a small settler, who had an equal right with that of Studholme to the land, having the whole machinery of the Government set in force against him, in order to deprive him of those same rights which were extended to this large land-occupier. The Committee, therefore, after going into the matter very fully, considered that the Government ought to, at any rate, aid the petitioner in securing a tenure co-terminous with that of Mr. Studholme. And, in this connection, they found that in the Native Office there was correspondence, including a letter which was supposed to be signed by the leading Native chief interested in this block, but they had a complete refutation from that Native chief of the accuracy of that letter. It appeared that this letter, whose accuracy was called in question, was drafted by the manager of Studholme's station, and this Maori chief who signed it declared that he did not know and was not made familiar with its contents. This was the letter which he handed to Mr. Craig, of which he (Mr. T. Mackenzie) had a copy:—

"FRIEND,—With reference to my letter of 17th October, 1888, to Mr. Lewis, this is to say that, although I signed my name to that letter, I had no spectacles at the time, and I was unable to read the contents of the letter; and I now apply to have the letter withdrawn and cancelled, because the contents are wrong."

Statements were made in that letter against Mr. Craig, which no doubt influenced the Native Office. The letter was signed by the chief Arapeta Haeretuterangi, and was witnessed by W. McDonnell, late licensed interpreter, Wanganui, and was sent to C. Cooke, solicitor, Wanganui, and the translation was certified to be correct by H. S. Hadfield, licensed interpreter. He therefore thought the Government would be only doing what was right towards a small settler if they assisted Mr. Craig in securing a tenure which, at any rate, would terminate at the same time as Mr. Studholme's.

Mr. J. McKENZIE said this report took him very much by surprise. As Minister of Lands he had not known anything of this petition. He was never asked to give evidence or to be present at the meeting of the Committee when the Committee heard evidence on the question. It appeared to him there was something behind the scenes in regard to this report.

An Hon. MEMBER.—No.

Mr. J. McKENZIE said, at any rate, he thought the Chairman of the Committee might

Mr. T. Mackenzie

have extended to him the courtesy of letting him know that the report in question was coming up. He knew something about this matter, and he ventured to say there was other evidence which the Committee might have got in connection with this subject. The evidence would be more copious from the Native Office than from the Lands Office, and he would like to know if the Committee examined any witnesses from the Native Office. He thought, at any rate, before this report was sent in by the Committee, the Chairman of the Committee should have extended to him the courtesy of letting him know that this subject was coming on. It was impossible for him, owing to his multifarious duties, to attend every Committee, and, whenever an important subject like this was coming up, he should have notice before the report was brought down to the House in this way. This was done without his knowledge, nor was he given an opportunity to defend his department. He would not ask the House to send the report back to the Committee, though he was sure if he did the House would support him. The petition was only referred to the Government, and would come before him then, and he would have an opportunity of looking into the papers properly and deciding on the matter.

Mr. THOMPSON wished, as Chairman of the Committee, to explain that the position taken up by the Minister was entirely wrong. The petition referred only to the administration of Native lands, and not in any way to the Lands Department. The petition was referred to the Native Department for a report; that report was brought up, and the proper officer from the Native Department appeared on two occasions to give evidence. All the information that was possible to be brought against the petitioner was brought by Mr. Sheridan, from the Native Department, so that department had every opportunity to meet the charges contained in the petition, and everything was done that could be done by the Committee. He could assure the Minister of Lands that if it had concerned his department in any way the Committee would not have come to any decision without his presence. He would go so far as to say that the Minister could have given no information whatever on the matter; it was outside his department; and the whole case referred to transactions that took place years ago, with which the honourable gentleman had nothing to do.

Mr. SEDDON said it was quite evident that his colleague had not the grievance he thought he had. But he (Mr. Seddon) had a grievance, because, from the admission of the Chairman of the Waste Lands Committee, it was now stated that it was a Native matter, and should have come before the Native Affairs Committee. It was plainly a transaction relating to Native lands, and a dispute as between Natives and Europeans.

Hon. MEMBERS.—No, no.

Mr. SEDDON said that it had been alleged that Mr. Studholme had had advantages given

to him that Mr. Craig also should have been granted, and they were told that the Government used all their machinery to favour Mr. Studholme's interests as against those of Mr. Craig.

An Hon. MEMBER.—Not this Government.

MR. SEDDON.—The Government of the day. All the same, the Government of that day, whoever it might have been, was on its trial. There had been maladministration charged against the Government—a most serious charge; and, though it might have been a Government to which he was opposed at the time, he would give it fair-play. He therefore moved, That the report be referred to the Native Affairs Committee. There might be some documentary evidence in the possession of the Government or of the Native Department which would, at all events, exonerate the Government from the grave charge levelled against it, whatever Government it might have been. There could be no harm in having the matter fully investigated, and the fuller the investigation the better for all concerned. But it was unfair to cast on the present Government the responsibility of saying whether or not their predecessors had done a wrong act. It appeared to him that the Committee were acting as they often did, in referring the matter to the Government for consideration. He would prefer that the matter should be fully investigated by the Native Affairs Committee. He cast no reflection whatever on the Waste Lands Committee, and he did not move in it with that spirit at all, though he did think the Committee should have let him know they were investigating the matter. The fact of their having had Mr. Sheridan there, who was not the head of any department, was not sufficient. He took that opportunity of saying that several petitions had been dealt with that session by different Committees, and no notice whatever had been given to Ministers—notice was simply given to Under-Secretaries. Now, there were matters known to Ministers which were not known to Under-Secretaries, and he thought Ministers should have notice. If that were done, and the Minister did not attend, it might be taken for granted that he was satisfied to let the matter go without his attendance; but to deal with such questions without the Minister knowing anything about them was not a course conducive to the good conduct of public business.

MR. DUNCAN would oppose this being referred to the Native Affairs Committee, for the reason that there was no dispute at all between the Natives and Mr. Craig. The fact that he had been allowed to remain eleven years in undisturbed possession without having any valid or registered title showed on the face of it that there was no dispute. There was not a tittle of evidence from the Natives that they disputed even this imperfect title. They were willing and anxious that he should have his title during the term of his lease.

MR. SEDDON said the chief admitted that he had sent a letter containing a charge that he now said he wished to withdraw.

MR. DUNCAN said it was quite true that the letter had been sent to the department, but not through the Natives. The letter was written by Studholme's manager, and the Native chief who signed it stated in his letter withdrawing that charge that he had not read the letter—not having his spectacles, he could not read it; and he now wrote to say that this letter was wrong. This showed that this manager of the Studholme syndicate wished to injure Craig in the Native Department. The Committee had been careful to conserve the interests of the Government, and they had a promise from Mr. Craig that he would be satisfied to take a lease from the Natives to terminate at the same date that Studholme's lease expired, and that he would do nothing to prejudice the Government in acquiring this land at the expiration of his lease. With regard to the Minister not having notice and not being present, that the Committee was not responsible for. It was the duty of the gentleman who represented the Government to inform his chief that he was coming to the Committee, and that this case of Mr. Craig's was being gone into. He had not one word to say as between the Natives and Mr. Craig. The only trouble he seemed to have in his mind was that there was a difficulty in arranging the matter with Mr. Studholme, and that he did not like to go to the trouble to arrange the matter as between Mr. Craig and the Natives. It appeared from the evidence that every effort was made that Mr. Studholme should secure this country instead of Mr. Craig; and that, Mr. Craig being in the confidence of the Natives, they held out from the Studholme influence, and kept faith with Mr. Craig, which seemed to be a thorn in the flesh to the Studholme syndicate, who seemed to be prepared to do anything in their power to "do" him out of this lease, so that they might acquire it themselves. The Committee were quite unanimous in the matter,—with more than half the Committee present,—that it was a very fair thing to come to an arrangement that Mr. Craig should get his lease on the same lines that Mr. Studholme got his, and arranged so that his lease should terminate at the time Mr. Studholme's lease terminated, because there was evidence that the Government were not at present disposed to interfere with Mr. Craig in any way, but to allow him to remain in possession. It was only fair that the Government should carry out the wish of the Committee.

MR. PIRANI only rose on account of the Premier's remark about giving notice about petitions before Committees. He would remind the honourable gentleman that on Tuesday next a petition would be before the Native Affairs Committee from Hoani Meihana, and on that occasion he (Mr. Pirani) would like the Government to be represented.

MR. G. HUTCHISON could assure the Premier that there was no dispute between the Natives and Mr. Craig. The difficulty had been that, after the transaction had been begun, prohibitions had been placed on all such

dealings. It was of no use referring it to the Native Affairs Committee.

Mr. SEDDON understood that it did not affect the Natives.

Mr. G. HUTCHISON said it was simply a difficulty in getting the title registered.

Mr. SEDDON understood that the Natives had originally signed letters in favour of Mr. Studholme, and now wished to withdraw in favour of Mr. Craig.

Mr. GREEN said the Premier was evidently labouring under a mistake, as he thought that the letter signed by the Natives took exception to the occupation of the land by Mr. Craig. That was not in accordance with the evidence at all. The evidence, which was admitted to be correct by the officer of the Native Department, was that Mr. Craig personally entered into arrangements with the Natives as far back as 1881. He succeeded in obtaining the signature of every Native interested in the land, but when he had obtained them it was pointed out to him by a Minister—he thought it was Mr. Bryce—that there was a Proclamation over the land that would preclude his obtaining a legal lease. He then discontinued any further negotiations for a period of three years. The land which Mr. Craig was negotiating for and that which Mr. Studholme was negotiating for was something under 50,000 acres. Mr. Studholme eventually made some arrangement with the Government, who placed him in a position that Mr. Craig had never been able to attain.

3.0. Mr. Craig did obtain the signatures of all the Natives interested in the 50,000-acre block, and he possessed the deed at the present time. A short time since some one got a letter from one of the Maoris under circumstances which had been described by the Maori himself in a letter read by the honourable member for Clutha. When the Native's attention was drawn to the contents of the letter, he got it interpreted to him, and he then wrote another letter stating how the first letter was obtained. So far as the evidence before the Committee was concerned, it went clearly to show that Studholme and Craig, in the early days, occupied a somewhat similar position, until the Government took up the position which they alone were able to take up: they procured a lease from the Natives and then granted a lease from the Crown to Studholme; and from that time to this they had paid the money which they collected from Studholme to each of the Natives interested. This was really the only question in dispute—whether Craig should get a legal title to the piece of ground which he had been in occupation of from that time to this. The Committee went most carefully into the question, and, so far as the Committee could, they had watched the interests of the Government, and actually obtained from Craig a concession. Craig maintained that he was entitled to have a lease running for the term which he had arranged with the Natives. The Committee said that they could not make such a recommendation, but they were prepared to make a recommendation that the lease should be

Mr. G. Hutchison

granted to him, and that the lease should terminate with Studholme's, so that the Government then would have the sole right of dealing with Studholme's and Craig's land when the leases expired.

Mr. BELL said it was very refreshing to see this desire to validate transactions entered into in defiance of the law. He knew something of this transaction, though he was not a member of the Committee. At the time when Craig negotiated for this land it was illegal to do so.

An Hon. MEMBER.—So it was with Studholme.

Mr. BELL said, Yes; but the Murimotu Act did validate Studholme's lease. Then came Mr. Ballance's Act, of 1884, which made it absolutely illegal to deal in any way with land there. He dared say Craig had made out a very good case—he was not disputing that. What he said was that sauce for Craig's goose should be sauce for other people's ganders—other people should be dealt with in the same way, because a number of transactions had been entered into in perfectly-good faith as between the Natives and Europeans,—the difficulty being that they were entered into in contravention of the law, as it was then not understood by the Europeans. An attempt was made in Mr. Ballance's Act of 1886 to validate such transactions, after due inquiry as to their being fair and honest; but, unfortunately, that failed through a judgment of the Court of Appeal, in which two Judges against one reversed a judgment of the Supreme Court. He hoped the House, when the Native Land Bill came on, would remember that Mr. Ballance did endeavour, in the Act of 1886, to give effect to honest and fair dealings which had been made in literal contravention but not in wilful defiance of the law, and to enable those persons who had had those fair and honest dealings with the Natives to complete the titles which they had so long been without.

Mr. J. MCKENZIE said it appeared to him that the petition had been heard by the wrong Committee. The Chairman of the Waste Lands Committee and other members of that Committee acknowledged that the Lands Department had nothing to do with the question. It was a question entirely for the Native Department. That being the case, he thought the Committee should have sent the petition to the Native Affairs Committee, and there it would have been dealt with by persons who knew something about it. The petition appeared to have been brought before the Waste Lands Committee, and had passed through somewhat hurriedly. That must have been so, because this was the first he had heard of it in the House. The petition had been dealt with, and the Government were asked to give effect to the report of the Committee. He thought now, as they had had that discussion, his honourable colleague should withdraw his motion. When this question came before the Government they would, as he had said before, investigate it properly before any effect was given to the recommendation of the Committee.

Mr. T. MACKENZIE thought the honour-

able member for Wellington City (Mr. Bell) must be labouring under error in stating that Craig entered into this transaction entirely illegally. Even if that were so—which, he thought, was open to discussion—the honourable gentleman went on to say that what was sauce for Craig's goose ought to be sauce for other people's ganders. His (Mr. Mackenzie's) opinion was that what was sauce for a large occupier like Studholme should also be sauce for Craig, who was a small settler. That was the point. The honourable member referred to the manner in which Studholme got his property. How did he get it? Simply by getting the machinery of the Government to do the work for him. In view of what had been done in Studholme's case, he thought this other man, who was without wealth, should also have the same chance.

Mr. SEDDON said, after the explanation which had been given, and seeing that the Committee only recommended the Government to place Craig upon the same footing as Studholme, it would now be a matter for the Government to inquire into. After the explanation which had been given by his colleague and himself, he understood that the matter was left to the Government, and they were to take the responsibility of further dealing with it. That being the case, he would ask leave to withdraw his amendment.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Mr. THOMPSON thought the Waste Lands Committee was scarcely deserving of the censure which had been passed upon them by the Minister of Lands. This case was brought up and gone into fully, and the officers of the department were there to give evidence. It was held over till the petitioner was sent for, to Wanganui. The officers of the department again came, and the whole case was before the Committee for two days. Everything which could be done was done to elicit all the information possible in reference to this man's position. There was no difference of opinion on the Committee as to the report—they were unanimous. The position this man was placed in was unfortunate. He was a poor man placed alongside a wealthy company. He did not want to become a freeholder. Since he took the lease the Government had acquired the freehold of most of the country, and they were likely to secure the whole of it. All he asked was to be allowed to occupy this land the same as Studholme was doing. Studholme's lease ran all round this man's property; and he thought it very hard, because he was a poor man, that he should be "sat upon" by the Land Purchase Department, and not get the same rights and privileges as Studholme had got. Seeing that the Natives were quite satisfied with the arrangement,—that there was no dispute whatever between Craig and the Natives, that he had paid his rent regularly, and every one was satisfied, he asked nothing unreasonable from the House. He thought the Committee had brought down a very fair and reasonable report. They did not attempt to bind the Government to anything; they simply

referred the matter to the Government for their consideration. He thought the Minister of Lands was rather severe on the Committee. He did not think the honourable gentleman was justified in making the remarks which he made.

Motion aged to.

ENCOURAGING ARTS AND INDUSTRIES.

Mr. HOGG asked the Government, Whether, in view of the glutted condition of the labour-market, and especially the difficulty found by parents in securing suitable trades or remunerative employment for their families, and seeing that large quantities of articles of foreign manufacture—the raw material of which exists in abundance in New Zealand—continue to be imported, they (the Government) are prepared to regard the placing of the tariff on a basis that will not merely encourage but compel the cultivation and expansion of the arts and industries for which the colony is manifestly adapted, as a question of emergency as well as expediency to be dealt with without further delay? He thought this question would sufficiently explain itself. It had come to his knowledge that there were large numbers of young people in the chief centres of population, including Wellington, out of employment, and others who had a great deal of difficulty in obtaining remunerative employment, and that consequently a large amount of distress existed amongst families. He believed that not alone here, but throughout New Zealand, there was a general feeling of disappointment that the tariff had not already been dealt with; and he thought that it was due not only to young New-Zealanders, but also to enterprising manufacturers, that some definite reply should be given by the Government to this really important question. It was all very well to be settling the lands of the colony, but if the country was to be placed in a thoroughly prosperous condition it was necessary to attend to the demands of the towns, and especially of the manufacturing centres, as well as to the demands of the country. He hoped to receive a favourable answer to the question.

Mr. SEDDON said the Government fully admitted the necessity there was for assisting to provide the better classes of trade for the people of New Zealand; but the Government also considered that the settlement of the land, by making the country districts prosperous, would also conduce to the prosperity of the towns, and when the towns were prosperous there would be trades for the youths. The Government, he thought, had given an earnest of their views on the tariff question by setting up a Committee, which Committee was now investigating the question. The matter was one that must be dealt with in such a way that it would not be recurring again the very next session. What was necessary for the good government of a country was, that when they had arranged the tariff they should allow it to remain for a reasonable period, and until absolute necessity existed for its alteration.

If they did not do that they created uncertainty, and the consequence was that the public suffered. The matter was under the serious consideration of the Government, and they hoped to deal with it at as early a date as possible.

WEST COAST WATER-RACE.

Mr. R. MCKENZIE asked the Minister of Mines, If the Government will place a sufficient sum of money on this year's public-works estimates to cover the cost of surveying a water-race from the Blackwater or the Big and Little Ohika to Addison's Flat, County of Buller; and also, will they this year make provision for procuring reliable data as to the area and probable value of auriferous ground in that locality suitable for hydraulic sluicing? He did not think this question required any explanation, the Minister of Mines being familiar with the locality.

Mr. CADMAN said this was rather a large order, and he might say the member for the district had been interesting himself in it for some time. He (Mr. Cadman) was told that the probable cost of this race would be over £100,000. Seeing that there was not much hope of the work being proceeded with, he would hardly be justified in holding out any hope to the honourable member. However, the usual vote for water-races would be on the estimates this time, but he could not promise very much for this particular work.

SEMI-POLITICAL MEETING AT PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS.

Mr. E. M. SMITH asked the Government, If they consider it right and proper, or in the interests of good government, for the House Committee to allow any room or place in Parliament Buildings, during the sitting of Parliament, to be used for a semi-political meeting, where a large number of candidates rejected at the last general elections assembled and gave vent to disrespectful language towards the Government, and members of the House of Representatives constituting the Liberal party and supporting the policy of the Government? He had put this question on the Order Paper, not on personal grounds, but on national ones, and was very angry about the subject. He knew he was prevented from making a speech in asking a question, and would content himself with asking the question, but it would depend upon the reply whether he should be satisfied or not.

Mr. SEDDON said he hoped to give the honourable gentleman a reply which would prevent further remarks. With regard to what had taken place, he supposed the honourable member referred to the banquet that had been held in Bellamy's on Saturday night last, and to the speeches made there. Well, with regard to the remarks made by candidates who were defeated at the elections, he thought that the members of the Government, being on the Government benches, and supported as they were, could afford to treat those remarks with indifference. Then they came to the question

Mr. Seddon

of whether or not the Parliament Buildings, or any building connected with Parliament, should be used for this purpose. In his opinion they should not. He did not know whether the House Committee had given its consent. As a member of that Committee, he might say that he knew nothing whatever of it. Then, he did not know that it was right to bring Bellamy's, or the Steward of Bellamy's, to compete with publicans, who had buildings for these purposes, and paid licenses. He did not think it right that there should be competition of that kind. It was never intended that it should be so, and it was a very strong argument indeed for doing away with the sale of spirituous liquors at Bellamy's, because he believed, if it had not been for the wines there, probably the Steward would not have been asked to tender or to cater for the banquet. Then there was a more serious question, because, on inquiry, he found that the amount asked for by the Steward, which was considered necessary to make it pay, had been refused, and he had been beaten down to a price which would entail a loss.

An Hon. MEMBER.—That is not the question.

Mr. SEDDON said that was a matter which affected the question as to whether or not it was a thing which should be permitted. Permitting a thing was well enough in its way; but, if it was to be permitted so as to entail a loss upon Bellamy's, that was a strong reason why it should not be permitted. The opinion of the Government on the question was that it was wrong in the first place to grant it, as the House Committee ought to have been consulted; and, as they had not been consulted, he would himself move, in the House Committee, in the direction of seeing that this kind of thing should not be repeated.

Mr. ALLEN said he thought it was only right, after the remarks the Premier had just made with regard to the Steward of Bellamy's and the cost of the entertainment, to say that he was in error altogether concerning it. The Steward had made his own charge, and that charge would not only pay the cost of the entertainment, but would enable him to make a reasonable profit.

Mr. SEDDON might say that he heard the amount was £1 5s.

Mr. ALLEN said it was absolutely incorrect.

NATIVES NOT PAYING DOG-TAX.

Mr. W. HUTCHISON asked the Native Minister, If he has received any information touching the imprisonment of certain Natives at Auckland for non-payment of dog-tax? If so, is there any reason why Natives should be treated in a manner different from other settlers in the matter of local taxes? So far back as 1872 he had occasion to draw the notice of the Government to a case similar to this, when a raid was made on Parihaka, and certain Natives were imprisoned; but he understood, from inquiries made at the time, that was a thing which was not likely to occur again. He found, however, so far as the newspaper re-

port went, that the same thing had recently occurred in Auckland, and he would respectfully submit to the Native Minister that there should be no distinction made between the one race and the other in carrying out the law respecting these local rates. He did not see, indeed, why the police should interfere in a matter of this kind, and assist the local authorities in the collection of their rates. Certainly, whatever was done, in connection with the dog-tax or other taxes, to a Native should be equally done to a European.

Mr. SEDDON said the reply of the Under-Secretary was as follows:—"I am not aware of any Natives having been imprisoned recently for non-payment of dog-tax, nor of their being treated in a manner different from other settlers in the matter."

Mr. W. HUTCHISON was exceedingly glad to hear it. It was, therefore, another charge against the Press Agency, and it was insufferable that they should send out these reports.

RAILWAYS.

Mr. JOYCE asked the Premier, Is it the intention of the Government to introduce a Bill this session to repeal "The Government Railways Act, 1887"; if so, when, and will the Government endeavour to put the Bill upon the statute-book this year?

Mr. SEDDON hoped to have the Railways Bill in the hands of honourable members in the course of the afternoon, and the Bill would speak for itself. The Government contemplated an alternative in that Bill. The first part proposed that the Minister should be on the Board, and the second part provided that, if the House passed a resolution that the railways after this session should be taken over by the Government they would be taken over.

SCHOOL-BOOKS.

Mr. FLATMAN asked the Minister of Education, If he will recommend that all children attending primary schools in New Zealand be supplied free of cost with one copy of each book required during their term in each standard? He thought it was high time they considered primary education more than they had done in the past. It was a well-known fact that the working-men of New Zealand could not now earn the money they did a few years ago, and it was a matter of great moment to them that their children should be supplied gratis with books for each standard. He hoped the Government would see their way to comply with this request.

Mr. SEDDON said that, on inquiry, the Government found it would cost a considerable sum of money, and, as the honourable member knew, money was rather scarce, and the Colonial Treasurer was suffering from tightness of the chest. It was on this account that the Government could not at present give a favourable reply to the honourable gentleman.

Mr. FLATMAN said, if it required so much money to do this, it showed how much the working-man was imposed upon.

AROWHENUA DESTITUTE.

Mr. FLATMAN asked the Minister of Labour, If he is aware that there are several workmen who are destitute at Arowhenua, South Canterbury, and if he will inquire into the matter and report?

Mr. SEDDON said he could give the honourable gentleman a favourable reply to this question. The stoppage of work was owing to the excessive fall of snow. It was hoped that would disappear as the summer advanced, and then the Government would be able to put these men at work. If there was not work available there the Government would try to meet the case in some other way. They were told there were some necessitous cases.

ROCK-BORING MACHINE.

Mr. GUINNESS asked the Minister of Mines, Whether the Government have purchased a rock-boring machine, and, if so, will the Minister inform this House upon what terms and conditions such machine can be obtained for use by prospecting associations or mine-owners? The Minister would no doubt recollect that he (Mr. Guinness) asked him in the early part of the session whether the Government would take steps to purchase a rock-boring machine, which, he understood, could be procured at a very cheap price. He would like to know whether the Minister had been able to effect such a purchase, and, if so, whether he would state the conditions or terms upon which different parties in the colony could procure the use of it, and what method he intended to adopt to settle as to who should have the use of it when there was more than one applicant.

Mr. CADMAN said the Government had decided on purchasing this machine, but had not yet taken delivery. No conditions had yet been decided upon, and as soon as the Government had decided upon them a copy of the conditions would be laid on the table.

SEMI-POLITICAL MEETING IN PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS.

Mr. SEDDON said, in answer to the question previously put by the honourable member for Bruce, that he had since made inquiries from the Steward of Bellamy's, and was informed that the amount charged was £1 10s. per head, but he was requested to do it for less.

Mr. ALLEN.—Did he say so?

Mr. SEDDON.—Yes.

Mr. ALLEN.—Have you got that in writing?

Mr. SEDDON.—I have not got it in writing, but I have his assurance. I am assured he was asked to do it for less.

GOVERNMENT ADVERTISEMENTS.

Dr. NEWMAN moved, That a return be laid before this House showing the gross amount spent on advertising by all the departments of the Government in the newspapers of the colony during the year ending the 31st March, 1894, omitting therefrom the cost of advertising the general election.

Mr. SEDDON moved an amendment to the effect that the return should include the years 1887 to 1894. It was scarcely fair to ask for a return for any one year. If this return was wanted for comparative purposes, why not have a full return?

Dr. NEWMAN would be quite satisfied to get this further information, but there was so much talk about asking for costly returns that he did not care to move for a return extending over the period mentioned by the Premier.

Amendment agreed to, and motion as amended agreed to.

TELEPHONE EXCHANGE LADIES.

Interrupted debate on the question, "That a return be laid before this House showing— (1) The names of all ladies who have been appointed for employment in the telephone exchanges of the colony; (2) the towns in which they are employed; (3) the salary each receives; and (4) the date of appointment."

Mr. GUINNESS said he would ask leave to withdraw this motion. After the very long discussion that took place in the House when this question was last before it, he had gained the object he had in view—that was, to get from the Government some clear expression as to the lines guiding the Postmaster-General in making past appointments. Anything they might now say in this resolution as to these past appointments could not in any way interfere with them. It was only that they might have a distinct idea as to what rule or regulation guided the department in making future appointments that he had placed the question on the Order Paper. He thought, after the discussion which had taken place, that object had been gained and the subject well ventilated.

Motion withdrawn.

CIVIL SERVICE.

Dr. NEWMAN, for Mr. Duthie, moved, That a return be laid before this House showing— (1) Number of cadets or young persons under twenty-five years of age now employed in the public service who have not passed the Civil Service examination; (2) number of such persons who have obtained office not in accordance with the provisions of "The Civil Service Act, 1886," that is, by competition; (3) number of extra clerks now employed, and number employed on 31st March, 1890; and (4) number of persons now employed in the public service who have been appointed since 31st March, 1890, and not in terms of the provisions of "The Civil Service Act, 1886."

Mr. SEDDON would ask the House whether it was fair to pass a resolution of this kind as it now read. In the first place, if the number of persons who obtained office was given, the return ought to show by whom they were engaged. If this were not shown it might be put down that all these persons were engaged by the present Government. Then, he thought paragraphs (3) and (4) should be struck out altogether, for this reason: that there were times when the Land-tax Department and the Insurance Department must have a large num-

ber of extra clerks. He therefore moved, as an amendment to the first part of the resolution, That the words "and by whom appointed" be inserted after the word "examination." If they were going to have a return of the number of extra clerks employed from year to year it would be a very expensive return, and would be of no service. Then, he would move to omit paragraphs (3) and (4), and he hoped the honourable gentleman would accept these amendments.

Sir R. STOUT thought the Premier's objection was quite fair. But if the return included extra clerks, and showed in what departments they were employed, there could be no objection to such a return. He quite agreed that the Land-tax Department and the Insurance Department required extra clerks at different times, and it was only fair that should appear. This return was a very proper one in order that honourable members might see whether the Civil Service Reform Act of 1886 was carried out or not. It was thought out of doors that the provisions of that Act were not being carried out, and that persons were admitted to the Service without undergoing the necessary examination, whilst others who underwent the examination and passed found they were unable to obtain appointments. He thought the return should show the departments in which these persons were employed; but he quite agreed with the Premier that it was only fair to include the addition proposed by the Premier to the first part of the resolution.

Mr. SEDDON pointed out that at the present time during the session there were extra clerks employed. It was manifestly unfair to take the number of clerks employed at the present time—in the middle of the session.

Sir R. STOUT said the return might show the departments in which they were employed, and then it would be at once seen whether they were employed in connection with the Legislature or not.

Mr. SEDDON said a number of extra clerks were now employed in the departments in getting out the returns asked for by honourable members. He objected to the form of the return.

Dr. NEWMAN said, if the Premier would agree to the striking-out of the word "now," and put in "on the 31st March," probably that would meet the difficulty.

Captain RUSSELL hoped the House would not strike out the words suggested. What possible wrong could there be in knowing the number of persons who were employed? It was a notorious fact that throughout New Zealand there was a general impression that there was no use trying to get employment under the Government unless you were of "the right colour"; and when the Premier objected to give the House a return of the persons who were employed he certainly lent a very strong colour to that impression.

Mr. SEDDON said the honourable gentleman was not going to catch him on "the hop."

Captain RUSSELL did not imagine one was ever likely to catch the Premier on the hop,

but, at any rate, they could not go outside the Chamber without seeing or hearing of instances of the improper employment of persons in the public service. It was not ten minutes since the Premier ordered a gentleman who, he believed, was an Under-Secretary, to go out and get details as to the amount of money to be paid for the recent banquet at Bellamy's. There they had an instance of a gentleman who ought not to be in that Chamber at all, but who was doing duty as a Private Secretary instead of attending to his proper duty as an Under-Secretary.

Mr. SEDDON said the honourable gentleman was wrong entirely.

Captain RUSSELL said he was not wrong. The fact that this gentleman was ordered out of the House there could be no doubt about, because his ears had not deceived him. He had heard the Premier say, "Go out and bring word as to the price of that banquet."

An Hon. MEMBER.—What banquet?

Captain RUSSELL.—The banquet in Bellamy's the other night. He heard it himself, and he said the gentleman who was ordered to find out this information was in the position of an Under-Secretary, he understood: at any rate, he was not a Private-Secretary, but he was an Under-Secretary, and ought to be, if he was doing his duty, up in his office attending to his duties as Under-Secretary. Instead of that, they saw him in and about the House day after day and night after night. That showed that this gentleman was in close attendance upon Ministers to do this, that, and the other thing for them which should not be done by such a senior Government officer: in fact, he was doing everything but that which he ought to do. It made one want to know what was the real position of the Civil Service under the present Ministers. There was no doubt there could be no independence on the part of the officials, because these officials dared not call their souls their own; they had to fetch and carry for Ministers, and were apparently expected to act as lackeys.

An Hon. MEMBER.—Prove it.

Captain RUSSELL said it was one of those things one could not prove, for this reason: If an unfortunate man dared to say his soul was his own he would soon have a very wretched body, because he would get kicked out for doing it. The position was becoming intolerable. They were not to have the right of getting any information about these persons whose services were paid for by the colony; and it was time the House rose to a sense of its own dignity. Whenever any question was asked of the Premier which he did not choose to answer the majority was asked to put a stop to it. It was not consonant with their own dignity that they should not be able to get information about these temporarily-employed gentlemen,—who might be doing good work, but members could not tell, for want of the information they desired. When he was travelling about the country, and was asked about the means of obtaining admission to the Civil Service, he had invariably to return the same answer, "No matter how bright your boys may be,

no matter what their qualifications may be, there is no chance of getting employment for them when it is asked for by a member of the Opposition." This doctrine of "the spoils to the victors," as had been pointed out over and over again, was destroying the welfare of the Civil Service of this colony, and destroying, he believed, the true and proper administration of the Government of this colony. Here they had an illustration of it. Directly one endeavoured to get any information which would go to show what was really being done, and as to the number of the friends of the party in power who had been foisted into office whether fit for it or not, they were told that it was not a proper subject for inquiry. It was of no use urging the House to insist upon getting returns which the other side did not want. The old cry about its being extravagant to get these returns meant absolutely nothing. There was scarcely a return produced or laid before Parliament which cost a ten-pound note, and yet the check which was placed upon Ministers by such returns might save the colony not only tens of pounds, but hundreds of pounds, in proper administration. Here was a perfectly simple return asked for, and yet they were told at once it would not be granted to them. This very fact made them believe there was something Ministers wished to hide.

Mr. GUINNESS thought, in the remarks he had just made, the honourable gentleman was not so logical as he generally was. He told them that the Civil servant of the present day could not call his soul his own; that he was under such a system of tyranny at the hands of the Ministry that he had got to be very careful in what he did—he had, in fact, no independence whatever. Then, in the very next breath, the honourable gentleman told them, when he was asked to prove his charge, that it could not be proved. He (Mr. Guinness) asked, was it right for an honourable member to make a charge which he admitted he could not prove? Was there any consistency in that? Was it right that members of this House should make charges against the Government, or against any one else, and, in the same breath, admit that they could not prove them? The charge of the honourable member for Hawke's Bay being of this character, it must go by the board. With regard to the amendment before the House, he thought that, looking at the way the motion was worded, the House ought certainly not to agree to it, because it picked out a particular day or date in order to cast discredit, if possible, upon the Government. He did not think this could be done, even were the return obtained in the form set forth in the motion; but, if the honourable gentleman wanted to be fair, why did he not move that a return be laid upon the table covering the last seven years, and showing the names and numbers of extra clerks appointed? They could then judge easily upon the matter. But they should not pick out a particular date—at a time, too, when, as honourable members must know if

the general public did not, a large number of extra clerks must be employed, not only in connection with Parliament, but also in connection with the departmental work, to give effect to the returns for which members of the Opposition were continually moving, many of which returns were not worth the paper they were written on, and yet which cost an enormous amount of money. It very often struck him that the members for Wellington moved for returns for the purpose of getting employment for persons whom they wished to foist into the public service, in order to find work for them during the session. As these returns cost a great deal of money to prepare, he only wished to say that the Government had taken the same stand with regard to them that they had taken on a return which he himself moved for the other day, and which would have not cost so much money. He would certainly vote against the motion in the form in which it was put before the House.

Mr. HALL said, after what had fallen from the lips of the honourable gentleman who had just sat down, there was very little to be said. He thought the motion might be amended by striking out the word "now." He therefore moved the omission of the word "now" in section 4 of the motion.

Mr. SEDDON did not wish to hamper the House, but he would like to make the motion perfect, so as to give the fullest information. What he suggested was this: that the number of extra clerks now employed, and the number from the 31st March in each year, since 1887, should also be given.

Sir R. STOUT had no objection to that.

Mr. SEDDON said in that case he asked leave to withdraw the amendment in order to put it that way.

Amendment withdrawn.

Mr. SEDDON was rather surprised at the statement recently made by the honourable member for Hawke's Bay, and he did not know whether it was a specimen of his usual courtesy. He would say to the honourable member for Hawke's Bay that if he (Mr. Seddon) were in his place, and heard a Minister giving instructions to an Under-Secretary, or to a Private Secretary, and it was not intended that he should hear those instructions, his ears would be closed; but the honourable member had transgressed the ordinary rules, and he was a gentleman. He might now be permitted to tell the honourable member that he gave no orders to the Under-Secretary. Was it to be permitted that the honourable gentleman might make a wrong assertion to the House—an assertion without foundation in fact, simply because he thought he heard what the Premier or another Minister was privately saying? It was surely a most un-

4.0. fortunate position for the honourable gentleman to place himself in. He wished honourable members to understand for the future, when they heard the honourable member for Hawke's Bay state that the Government was doing this or the Premier was doing

that, that he was not saying it because he believed it was true, but for the purpose of eliciting information. He hoped that would be remembered. He might tell the honourable gentleman that he spoke to an officer of the Treasury, who, during the session, acted as a Private Secretary to the Treasurer. He was the only officer there acting as a Private Secretary, and he asked him to ascertain from the House Steward, after the statement that had been made by the honourable member for Bruce, what the charges for the banquet at Bellamy's were. Being the Minister in charge, and also a member of the House Committee, he had a perfect right to do so. A statement was made, and that statement was challenged in the House; and surely the Premier had a right to ask for an answer, and to ascertain the true facts. That was all that was done. The House Steward was under his control; he was a member of the House Committee; and the House Steward was on the parliamentary estimates, and he (Mr. Seddon) was responsible, if anything was to occur so far as the Steward was concerned, to the House, and he would be so held by the House and the honourable gentleman. And he simply ascertained whether an officer had done what was right and had concluded a business transaction correctly; and simply because he asked to be put in possession of that information he was to be censured by the leader of the Opposition. He might tell the House he intended to follow in the course he followed to-day, and to be in a position, being asked for information, to give to the House the true facts of the case. The information as to what the House Steward had charged—

Sir R. STOUT.—That was not asked.

Mr. SEDDON.—It was raising the question as to whether it was a correct thing—

Sir R. STOUT.—No.

Mr. SEDDON said the question was, whether the Government would permit the Steward to deal with these things outside Parliament—whether or not it was desirable. The honourable gentleman wanted to get him off the track, but he declined to be drawn. Now he came to the charges levelled by the honourable member for Hawke's Bay as to the position of the Civil Service in the colony and their relations with Ministers. He had said, and would say again, that the Civil servants of the colony had every confidence in the present Ministry, and they had never before had the same tenure, the same security, that they enjoyed under the present Ministry and under the Liberal party. What did the Conservative party do? They told these unfortunate Civil servants they would place increases on the estimates for them, and led them to believe they would get those increases—absolutely, Minister after Minister promised to give them increases; they brought the increases down on the estimates, threw them on the table of the House, and then—to use an American term—"scotched." That was the way the honourable gentleman treated the Civil Service of the colony. You would meet unfortunate Civil servants from the

Mr. Guinness

Big Buildings down there during the session, pale, emaciated, careworn, and they would ask members, "Do you think my salary will be allowed to pass? Do you think the Minister will stand by my salary? Shall I have to go?" They had none of that now.

An Hon. MEMBER.—They dare not ask a member that now.

Mr. SEDDON said, No; there was no necessity for them to ask such questions now, or to come pleading and begging to members. They knew they had a strong Government and the Liberal party at their backs, and rested contented. As to the number of clerks, should he tell the House what was done by the Atkinson Government, of which the honourable member was a member? To show to the House and the country a reduction, they actually struck off the Civil servants who were entitled to the benefits of the Civil Service, paid them their compensation, gave them their money; and the very same day—they never went out of the office—took them on, and kept them as extra clerks.

Captain RUSSELL.—Who were they?

Mr. SEDDON said he had made the statement, and could prove it. That was during the time of the Atkinson Government; and that was how they effected savings; and that was why he moved the amendment, and when the return came he would show—and it was quite right they should have it—how many of those Civil servants originally in the Service had left it, and were now engaged as extra clerks; and it would not be to the credit of the honourable gentleman, or of the Government of which he was a member.

An Hon. MEMBER.—That does not matter.

Mr. SEDDON said, No, it did not matter at all. It did not matter that during the present Government's term of office the Civil servants were said not to be able to call their souls their own. But when it came to retiring a Civil servant who was entitled to the benefits of the Service, paying him compensation, and the same day taking him on as an extra clerk, and keeping him there from that day to this, then he wanted to know, in comparison, what was the position of the Service? The Government were driven to such stress to show a reduction that they retired from the Service deserving officers who had no fault to be found with them, and simply made them temporary clerks. Then, it had been time after time alleged by Opposition members that the Civil servants had not a soul to call their own. But the Civil servants now were a credit to the Service; they had confidence in the Government, and confidence in the House, and in the people who employed them. They had heard so often in the House the same statement that the Civil servants were under a reign of terror that it was about time to meet it. It was unfair to create a doubt in the minds of Civil servants as against the Government. What object was there in it? They would endeavour if possible to foster disloyalty. It was unfair to the Civil servants and to Ministers that they should be charged as they had been in this respect. And if one

took the number that had been retired by the present Government, except those whom they had to retire when they retrenched departmental expenditure in 1891—they had then a most unpleasant task to perform, and they reduced the number to the bed-rock; but from that time forward, except where there had been misconduct, and the case had gone before a Board of Inquiry, there had been no discharges; and he challenged the honourable gentleman to bring any charge of the sort against the Government. It was not a crime for the Government to say to a Civil servant, "You must perform your duty; you must do your work." There was a time when, so far as Under-Secretaries were concerned, the Minister absolutely did nothing. It could be proved that, from the time they were in the office, and the way they were all over the country, the government of the colony was carried on by the Under-Secretaries. If any blame had to fall it was on the unfortunate Under-Secretary.

Captain RUSSELL.—Like Mr. Blow.

Mr. SEDDON said the Minister never found fault even there. The officer made a mistake; he admitted making a mistake; it was one of those things that might happen in the best-regulated family. It was corrected as soon as it was discovered, and the only blame that was attached was that when the correction took place the Minister had not been, as he ought to have been, informed that a correction had been made. Had he (Mr. Seddon) been informed at the time, he would have made an explanation to the House, and that would have been the first and last they would have heard about it. He would ask the honourable member for Hawke's Bay never again to repeat what he had said. The Government said it was not the Under-Secretaries who should be allowed to govern the country; the responsibility rested with the Ministers; and, if proof were wanted that both the Civil servants and the Ministers were doing their duty, it was to be found in the fact that this year the unauthorised expenditure was down to £11,000—the lowest possible point it had ever reached in this country. Then, it might be seen, too, by the whole of the general estimates, that the Under-Secretaries, and the Civil servants generally, had kept within their estimates. It was another proof of careful administration, both on the part of Ministers and of the Under-Secretaries and the officers under them. He said, if what the Government asked to be done by the Civil Service was conducive to good government and administration, the honourable gentleman and members of the House should be the very last to cast a reflection on the officers or upon the Government. Men who went round with not a soul to call their own, or who were afraid of their employers, or were trembling in their shoes, did not attend to their work. The Civil servants were doing their work well. They had done so, and would continue to do so; and he would take that opportunity of saying that, as long as the Government were on those benches, they would

pay every deference to those under them and respect them; and, in doing so, they would know that the Civil servants would respect the Government. They might differ from them politically, and did so, but he respected other men's opinions, and not because of that would they ask any officer to do anything unfair. He undertook to say that for twenty years there was a Government in power in this country, and during that time—there was no doubt whatever about it, and it followed as a natural sequence—those connected more closely with the Service were appointed to the Service: so much so that when the senior member for Wellington City came into power in 1884 one of the first things he did was to pass an amended Civil Service Act. They had fairly complied with the law; they were practically condemned before the report was to hand. The return asked for was a one-sided one, taking the 31st of March, in 1890, saying nothing of what occurred in the interim—nothing that occurred during the time other Ministers were in office. The return asked for was a catch-return, placed on the Order Paper for no other purpose. If it had been intended to be a fair return it would have been differently worded. To allow it to go now as printed would be unjust and quite unfair to the House. It required that a certain department should be exempted. He did not wish to do what was unfair in proposing the amendment, but he desired to make the return as complete and fair as it was possible to make it.

Captain RUSSELL would like to say one or two words in reply to the Premier. The honourable gentleman paid him the inestimable compliment of telling him that he was a gentleman. He felt that, now he had that hallmark upon him, nobody would ever question his status. There was no doubt about this: that, whatever the Premier might say about the employment of officers and Private Secretaries, the gentleman to whom he (Captain Russell) had alluded did hold the position of Under-Secretary.

Mr. SEDDON said the honourable gentleman was labouring under a mistake as to the position which this officer held. If he made inquiry he would find that he was not an Under-Secretary. Probably the officer wished he were.

Captain RUSSELL asked if the Premier would kindly state what position this officer did hold.

Mr. SEDDON said, if the honourable gentleman looked at the estimates he would find that he was down there as a clerk to the Industries and Commerce Department. He was not an Under-Secretary. He knew that the officer would only be too glad if he were.

Captain RUSSELL said the Premier had said so, and he must know more about it than he (Captain Russell) did, but the gentleman had been performing the duties of an Under-Secretary. It was undoubtedly wrong that a gentleman who was at the head of a department such as Commerce and Industries should

be kept in that House to run errands for Ministers. He had actually before him at the time a question to ask the Premier as to what position this gentleman occupied, and the only reason why he had not given notice of it was that there was a delicacy in mentioning the names of officers. He was in doubt as to how best he could get the information without involving the gentleman's name in the question. The Premier went on, with his amusing audacity, to tell the House that he was always very careful to have reliable information before he gave it to the House. He spoke upon this wretched banquet—

Mr. SEDDON.—Hear, hear!

Captain RUSSELL said "wretched banquet" advisedly, because it was, to his mind, contemptible that such a question should be brought up in the House. If honourable members chose to give an old fellow-worker in that House a recognition of the value in which they held his services, it seemed to him, at any rate, an undesirable thing that such a subject should be brought up in the House. The Premier stated that he was careful of his information before he gave it to the House, and yet, though it might have been improper for him to have heard it,—though he could not help it if the Premier spoke so loudly,—a gentleman was sent out immediately after the Premier's statement to ascertain whether the information he had just given to the House was reliable, and that gentleman came back with the answer showing that it was not. He might say that he had had the pleasure of knowing many of the Civil servants for years past. He had known them as a member of that House; he had known them in his private capacity, and also in his Ministerial capacity. He would reiterate again that they were, with few exceptions, in intolerable fear of the Ministers; and they dared not express their views in a manner which he thought was absolutely necessary for the proper conduct of the departments, because some Ministers did not wish to have a proper departmental view put before them, and they refused to listen to anything except what they wished to hear—instead of allowing, as every Minister should do, the departmental officer to come before him and place entirely departmental views before the Minister, allowing the Minister subsequently, if he chose, to set aside the departmental recommendation owing to reasons of policy, and say, "You must carry out my view of the matter," which, no doubt, it was the duty of a Minister in many instances to do, after he had heard the ordinary departmental view of the case. Notwithstanding what had been said by the Premier, there was every reason to suppose that the administration of the Atkinson Government was in every degree more efficient and purer than that of the honourable gentlemen opposite. Then, honourable members were told by implication that he (Captain Russell) brought down the estimates and "scouted."

Mr. SEDDON.—What about Judge Edwards?

Mr. Seddon

Captain RUSSELL said, as to Judge Edwards, the Government did not "scoot" at all.

Mr. SEDDON.—What about the £50,000 reduction?

Captain RUSSELL said, quite so; but that was not "scooting" from a particular salary. He might remind the Premier that when he was in opposition he did not care what became of the Civil servants or the dignity of the House, or even the welfare of the country—he was prepared in his ruthless way to cut at the Civil Service, and he was not restricted at all by any sense of what was right. His only endeavour upon every occasion, irrespective of patriotism, was to injure his opponents, let the result be what it might. There was no sense of dignity or proper feeling, but simply a ruthless endeavour to injure his opponents, no matter what the result might be to the Civil Service. It was no matter how the Civil servants suffered, so long as the honourable gentleman could score a small political triumph. Then, the honourable gentleman led the House to believe that he (Captain Russell) had dismissed a Civil servant and on the same day placed him on the list of extra clerks. He would give the most unhesitating denial to that statement.

Mr. SEDDON.—I did not say you.

Captain RUSSELL said the Premier was far too clever to say that, but the whole gist of his argument pointed to one individual man, and when the honourable gentleman was challenged he said, "I did not say you." There was nothing in the whole argument which did not admit of being pointed at him, and it was an endeavour to convey to the House the impression that he had done an improper act by retiring a man on compensation and appointing him on the same day as an extra clerk. He would give the most unhesitating denial to that statement. Then, the honourable gentleman went on to say that as soon as he came into office he reduced the Civil Service to the bed-rock. And, no doubt, he did reduce it, and there was a precious scoop used in getting down to that bed-rock. No doubt he had done so: he had got a majority at his back who would support him under any circumstances. That was his bed-rock; and, having got that bed-rock, what edifice had he built upon it? Had he built a magnificent structure? No; he had done nothing of the kind. All that he had aimed at, from first to last, had been to build a bridge to carry himself over troublesome waters. He cared nothing about anybody else. He had constructed an edifice of that sort. He could not compliment the honourable gentleman upon the edifice, or upon his policy in doing what he had done. Then, the honourable gentleman went on to tell the House how during his predecessor's term of office the country was governed by Under-Secretaries. He said that now matters were entirely different; that we were no longer governed by Under-Secretaries, but by Ministers. He (Captain Russell) did not think that was any special cause for congratulation. The country had never been governed by Under-Secretaries, but Ministers

formerly wisely listened to the departmental officers, who knew five times as much about the administration of the colony as the Premier did, or was ever likely to know. They listened to the Under-Secretaries, and, in his opinion, they had thus avoided great misfortunes and mistakes. It was the duty of a Minister to listen to the Under-Secretary; but if, for some reason or other, the Minister chose to set aside the recommendation of the Under-Secretary, he would of course do so. The Premier now said that everything came under the eye of the Minister; that he knew all that went on; that the Minister did not, like his predecessors, trust to the Under-Secretaries; that the Minister took on himself the responsibility for all that went on. The honourable gentleman said that: and yet within two minutes he spoke in quite a different way. The honourable gentleman said that an Under-Secretary had laid on the table of the House a paper which was only £100,000 wrong out of £200,000 odd; and that paper, which was laid on the table without the knowledge of the Minister—unless he took, as he was afraid he would not take, his fair share of the fault which was then committed—that paper was laid on the table, was removed from it and altered by the Under-Secretary, was again put on the table by the Under-Secretary, and the Premier knew nothing of it whatever. That was the statement; yet the country was not governed by Under-Secretaries! The Minister had not the courage to take on his shoulders the responsibility for that which had been done. No; he actually did that which he had no words to characterize. The blame should have rested on his own shoulders—upon the broad, burly figure which he was so fond of boasting about in that House. The honourable gentleman did not take up that position: he threw the responsibility upon the Under-Secretary, who dared not call his soul his own, perhaps for fear that his body might suffer. This was an instance of the way in which the country was governed not by Under-Secretaries, but by Ministers, who took all the responsibility for any mistakes that might be made. It was a notorious fact that the Minister himself signed this incorrect document and went about boasting to the country of all the economies he had made! And the figures of this false document were quoted as an illustration of the savings made in the public-works expenditure. The honourable gentleman might laugh, but he knew that was absolutely right: not only he himself, but his colleagues and supporters based their claim to confidence as a non-borrowing and a self-reliant Government on this document. It was very well to say that the member who made that charge was defeated at the elections. Many men suffered in the cause of justice. He did not think the Premier ever would. As another illustration of the unreliable arguments of the Premier, the honourable gentleman said that for twenty solid years the Government and the appoint-

ments were all on one side in politics.
4.30. Well, what did the honourable mem-

ber mean by "twenty solid years of one Government"?

Mr. SEDDON.—The continuous Ministry.

Captain RUSSELL.—The continuous Ministry! That Government went out of office when Sir George Grey came into power in 1887, and therefore its power of making appointments was broken during the time the Grey Government was in office. Then Sir George Grey was turned out of office, and what was misnamed the continuous Ministry came in again. Why the words "continuous Ministry" should be used against a Government as a term of opprobrium he was absolutely unable to understand. If the honourable member himself, twenty years hence, had a record of twenty years' continuous service to the colony, would he admit that to refer to that was to employ a term of opprobrium? He was absolutely unable to understand why it should be deemed opprobrious. On the contrary, if that occurred, people would begin to believe that the honourable gentleman was worthy of some confidence.

An Hon. MEMBER.—One man one vote.

Captain RUSSELL.—Yes; with the one-man-one-vote he believed that the political conscience would awake, and that the one-man-one-vote would support honourable members on the Opposition side of the House, believing that whatever their policy might be they had a stronger and a stricter interest in advancing the interests of the colony than the honourable gentlemen who for three years past had occupied the Government benches. But the assertion that there had been twenty years of continuous administration was wrong. There was an interlude of the Grey Government, and, subsequently, an interlude of the Stout-Vogel Government. In addition to that, the Premier went on to disprove his own assertion as he spoke. Treating it with the exuberant verbosity for which he was distinguished, he went on to say that the honourable member for Wellington City (Sir R. Stout) had introduced the Civil Service Bill, and that that very Bill did have the effect of preventing the appointment of men for their political "colour." But the great object of that Bill—the very spirit of the Civil Service Act of Sir Robert Stout—had been ruthlessly broken on every possible occasion by the Premier and his colleagues. He might refer to the very fact that he refused to give the House this return as proof beyond doubt that the appointments to the Civil Service were not made in the spirit of the Civil Service Act. The desire in passing that Act was not to put men of "the right colour" into the Civil Service, but to have a strong non-political Civil Service. But, so long as the policy of "the spoils to the victors" was observed, so long as they put people of "the right colour" into every imaginable office—whether it were the highest in the Service or the appointment of a charwoman to scrub the Buildings—they would never have that. They could not expect a strong non-political Civil Service so long as the honourable gentleman sat as Premier in the House.

Captain Russell

Mr. DUNCAN said he remembered that in 1883 an honourable gentleman who was now in England, the Right Hon. Sir George Grey, charged the Government of that time with having the Civil Service composed, from the policeman of the street to the Judge on the bench, not only of men of "the right colour," but of their own families and connections. They could find that in *Hansard* on the authority of a man of such experience as Sir George Grey, who was speaking on a state of things with which he was well acquainted. That was a well-known fact. Then, the reigning-family appointments had come down through the whole of this continuous Ministry for a large number of years. Now it had been found that those gentlemen were not able to continue appointing their family connections and relatives: and that was the trouble now. That was why they heard so much, as they continually were hearing, of appointments of "the right colour." And not only had such appointments been made, but many of them, such as the Judge Edwards appointment, were appointments that were not necessary. That appointment had not been refilled to this day, which showed that the Government of which the present leader of the Opposition was a member tried to make appointments that were wholly unnecessary, for the purpose of getting in all their friends. The leader of the Opposition, when on the Government benches, had sat a whole night opposite to him, and he had kept him there for a whole night, until eight o'clock in the morning, to explain the Judge Edwards appointment, and he had been unable to justify that appointment on any one point. They had not only filled appointments that were necessary, but they had made others, and what they wanted was evidently to have so many people thrust on the colony that the appointments would last for years to come, so that it would bar others from having any chance of being able to appoint any one for years. Further than that, it was well known that some of the gentlemen who had been appointed were so opposed to the present Government that they could not get on with them; they were so opposed to them that they were unfair to the Government. That was well known. He did not say that all were like that, but some of them were. That was why the members of the Opposition were constantly getting up and deploring the condition of the Civil Service at the present time. It showed what was in their minds, and they kept the agitation going so that there might be no more appointments of "the right colour." Though he had been in the House for many years, he had known it was hopeless to recommend anybody, it did not matter of what "colour" he was, because he was not a follower of the then Government.

An Hon. MEMBER.—How do you find it now?

Mr. DUNCAN would tell them. There was not a single man in the whole Civil Service that he had recommended to it. Though he had been a member of Parliament for thirteen years he defied the House or the Government to find

a single relative or friend of his, or a man he had recommended, in the Civil Service. He would not have said that had it not been that he had been challenged to it by the honourable member for Wellington City. He hoped that he and other members of the House could say the same thing.

Mr. BELL asked, would the honourable gentleman allow him to say that there was not a single person in the Civil Service who had been recommended by him?

Mr. SEDDON said the honourable gentleman had been offered an appointment.

Mr. BELL.—Not in the Civil Service.

Mr. SEDDON.—But as Judge; and you accepted it, and then declined.

Mr. DUNCAN said he hoped these wretched recriminations about the Civil Service would stop; but, if they would have a return, he hoped it would be a return of the appointments for the last twenty years. That would be an eye-opener to the honourable gentlemen on the Opposition side of the House. With regard to what had just transpired, the honourable member for Hawke's Bay said that it was unfair to have the officers of the department act as messengers. Was it anything out of the way for an officer on business of the department to go on a message? If the Premier asked him to go with a message to Bellamy's—within twenty yards of the chamber—and ask a question, was that a terrible crime? Surely to Goodness there was nothing wrong in that! He supposed the honourable member for Hawke's Bay would like to see them with white gloves, and to have it understood that they were not to be called on to do anything except "boss" the Government that they should assist. He had no doubt the honourable gentleman had been quite willing to do what he had been asked to do, and was quite satisfied to do anything of that kind when there was no one else present to do it. He had risen, however, not for the purpose of speaking on these matters, but, if possible, to stop these recriminations, and stop the wasting of time to no purpose which was now indulged in on all and every occasion. He hoped they would hear no more of it.

Mr. E. M. SMITH said he was rather surprised when he heard the honourable gentleman who moved this motion say he was willing to accept—

Sir R. STOUT said he had not moved it.

Mr. E. M. SMITH said the honourable gentleman had spoken to it, and had said that he was perfectly satisfied with the terms the Premier had proposed. That, he thought, should have been the end of the matter, and they should have gone on with the business. But when he heard the leader of the Opposition get up and talk in the way he had done, he could not understand it for a moment, and thought there must be something in the background. As the honourable gentleman proceeded he dropped a little hint which had given him a cue. What was that cue? It was that the leader of the Opposition had an idea that he (Mr. Smith) had no right

to ask the question he had asked that afternoon in reference to that wretched banquet. He believed the honourable gentleman had been talking most of the time to prevent him from moving the adjournment of the House in order to give his views upon that banquet. Now, this banquet and the message about ascertaining the cost of the banquet had been brought into this debate. It was only a short time ago that they had called upon members of the House to vote £1,000 of the ratepayers' money to wipe off the slate and to give Bellamy's a new start. If he had known that they were going to keep up the staff till two o'clock on Sunday morning, wasting the electric light and gas, and that these speeches were to be allowed to be made, he should have said it was wrong in principle, and that the sooner it was put down the better. What had they been doing to reform and to improve the electorates? They had done away with bands and displays to keep down party feeling—with public nominations in order to calm things down, and here they were doing the reverse, and allowing semi-political meetings of men who had been rejected, and had lost the confidence of the people.

An Hon. MEMBER.—Is that in order?

Mr. SPEAKER.—The matter has been dragged in by other members.

Mr. E. M. SMITH said those honourable gentlemen did not like their misdeeds to be known. He believed in people giving banquets to their friends and to public men, and he was not going to say a word against those gentlemen, for he had great respect for them as old colonists; but when they were brought here while Parliament was assembled, and were using the offices of the House, and using the Parliament Buildings, for semi-political meetings, and were making such violent political speeches against the policy and to the injury of the colony, he must say that it was his bounden duty as a member of the House, and representing the intelligent electors he did represent, to bring this matter forward, in order to prevent its occurring again. He would ask, was it fair, or right, or just? He would give them a sample of one or two of the speeches made. Here was one of them: and he declared that such a thing would not be allowed in any other country in the world—it would cause riot and rebellion; there was no doubt about that. This was what an ex-member of the House said:—

"Mr. R. C. Bruce, ex-M.H.R., proposed 'The Legislative Council,' and, in criticizing the policy of the present Government, protested against the dangerous and crude ideas dragged from the slums of thought finding a place upon the statute-book. He hoped, however, that the Council would do their duty as they had done in the past. They had been accused of obstruction, though they had never been guilty of it. They had never obstructed useful and necessary measures."

That was saying that those who represented the people in the House of Representatives had been dragged from the slums. Could

they allow such language as that to be used within Parliament Buildings? The next thing would be that they would come into the public galleries and denounce the policy of the Government and the members of the Liberal party, and then they would rush the House. He was going to prevent that taking place. The speeches recorded in the newspapers did neither more nor less than traduce the policy of the Government and the character of the members of the Ministry. He did not want to weary the House by referring to them, but he would make an extract or two, in order that it might get into *Hansard*, and that the people of the colony might know what had been said and done. This was the report of what Mr. Rolleston said.—

“Mr. Rolleston having given a sketch of his political career and his friendships with the statesmen of the past, he said, referring to Captain Russell, Mr. Mitchelson, and others around him that night, that it seemed a strange perversity of fate that they should be regarded by some as out of sympathy with the masses, and adverse to the spirit of progress. There was no reason to believe that in any point the land-administration of the past was at all inferior to that of the present; in fact, he had reason to believe that the present land-administration was in a terrible mess. He did not desire to introduce personal matters on the present occasion, but he might express a passing regret that his pet child—not altogether acceptable, it was true, to a number of those present—the ‘perpetual lease,’ had been relegated from time to the region of eternity by the great Liberals. He did not care whether they were called Conservatives or Liberals, they were working towards what was urgently needed—the formation of a national party, representing all that was ablest, best, and truest, for without truth nothing could be accomplished. The weakness of his party was only numerical. Their numbers were small, but the principles for which they fought were great. They were a standing protest against the notion that a healthy democracy could subsist with a gagged Press and a muzzled Parliament.”

There was language to be used! Then Mr. Rolleston went on to remark,—

“The pendulum just now was swinging pretty far in the direction of the substitution of personal and autocratic power for the expression of the popular will by legislation. It was a shocking thing to his old-fashioned notions of constitutional rules that the popular will expressed in the Disqualification Act should be set aside by one man, and that the Parliament of the country should indorse an appointment in defiance of the Act to a position in the precincts of the Chamber of the representatives of the people. There could be no worse thing than that the popular will should be set aside by individual tyranny.”

Thus the speech went on from beginning to end, and he asked every honourable member to divest himself of all party feeling in the matter. He would ask members to express an opinion whether it was right and proper, when Parlia-

ment was assembled, that these semi-political meetings should take place in the Parliament Buildings,—that this expenditure should go on, and the Parliament Buildings be kept open on Sunday mornings for these meetings. He had entered his protest against it; and, in order to show what the people's paper—the *Evening Post*, said on the matter, he would read what that paper said of the banquet:—

“The semi-private political banquet to Mr. Rolleston was, we think, a decided political mistake. It was quite right of the former political friends, supporters, or colleagues of Mr. Rolleston and Mr. Bryce to entertain those gentlemen at banquets when circumstances necessitated their retirement from active political life. This was duly done, and each in turn made what was understood to be a valedictory speech. Since Mr. Bryce took his official farewell there have, however, been one or two reappearances, and the function of Saturday night, although semi-private, afforded Mr. Rolleston an opportunity for again appearing in a leading part on the political stage and taking another benefit. Sims Reeves has been making ‘positively last appearances’ and taking farewell benefits for the last ten or twelve years, and other distinguished artists have appeared for a great many ‘last appearances.’ The public, however, is apt to tire of such repeated demands on its sympathy, even with its greatest favourites. In politics the thing is still more tiresome. No party is ever strong enough to carry its unsuccessful men on its shoulders. Mr. Rolleston and Mr. Bryce are both sterling, honest men, who have done good service, and would, no doubt, be capable of doing more if they were permitted the opportunity, but the public is tired of them. The verdict may be, and is, we believe, an unjust one, but there can be no appeal save to time, and all attempts to force them upon an unwilling public must fail, and seriously injure those who make them. We tell Mr. Rolleston and Mr. Bryce frankly that, having had their opportunity and missed their mark, the public will now have none of them, and that they can best assist the party with whose principles they are in sympathy by refraining from any appearance of active participation in its counsels.”

These men had been beaten at the ballot-box, they had retired from politics, and yet they were interfering with the functions and duties of members of Parliament. What did they do last election? They hired one of these gentlemen to assassinate him politically. They brought him up into his district to deliver an address in favour of his (Mr. Smith's) opponent. How did they think his people treated that gentleman? They passed a resolution thanking him for his address, and gave “Three cheers for little Smith.” The gentleman in question was a most genial old gentleman, and they gave three cheers for him; and then he (Mr. Smith) said to them, “Give three cheers for a better man than the gentleman you have cheered ever was or ever will be.” The question was asked, “Who is he?” and he (Mr.

Mr. E. M. Smith

Smith) replied "That's me"; and then they cheered him. When these very people had failed in the election, and lost the confidence of the country, they assembled within these parliamentary walls and held forth in the manner they had done. He hoped they would not meet there again. If they did he would take another opportunity of showing that the country did not want them. This was his only object in speaking that afternoon. He had no personal animosity in the matter at all. He only desired to take a manly and independent stand in regard to it. They had been ruled too long by these persons in the past, and now these persons had lost the confidence of the people of New Zealand. The men now in power had the confidence of the people, and they should be allowed to carry on the government of the country, and carry out those Liberal measures which were intended for the masses, and not for a class, as had been the case in the past. Then, as to this talk about the Civil Service, he never heard such talk as this from Civil servants in his district, and these Civil servants might well exclaim, "Save us from our friends!" for these people were doing nothing else but raising party strife in the country. Certainly there had been some reforms made by clearing off people who were too old, and others in the Civil Service because there was no work for them to do. The Survey Department in his district was well manned, and the officers were doing their work honestly and well, and the people were contented with their services. So far as his district was concerned, the Civil servants revered the Government, because they knew they acted fairly, honestly, and justly; and he knew the people of his district not only voted for Ministers, but they idolised them, because they knew the good that their policy was doing for them. They were progressing in that district, and he wished every other district was doing the same as they were doing in the Garden of New Zealand: then they would not have so much talk about the evils the Government were bringing on the country. Some other gentleman might wish to give his views on this matter. He hoped the Opposition would not think, as he had already disclaimed any, that he had any personal motives to serve. He had consulted no one. After he had read this speech of Mr. Rolleston's he said to himself, "It is wrong." He had studied the politics of this country for thirty years, and he felt that this was one of the worst and most injudicious attacks that could be committed on Parliament when Parliament was sitting. If they had hired a room outside they could have made any speeches they liked, and could have sat up to Sunday morning; but when they occupied the people's property it was another matter altogether, and he would do his best to prevent its occurring again.

Mr. BELL wished to make an observation with regard to what fell from the Premier as to the honourable member for Hawke's Bay having mentioned what was said to a gentle-

man behind the chair. He quite agreed with the Premier, and he was sure the honourable member for Hawke's Bay would also, that if one heard by accident what a Minister said to a Private Secretary, or a gentleman behind the chair, it should be treated as if one did not hear it. But he (Mr. Bell) heard what was said, and he certainly thought—it appeared he was wrong—that it was a part of the public pantomime constantly played on the Government benches, and that the honourable gentleman spoke in that tone and in that manner with a view of dramatically showing to that side of the House, and to his own side, that he was going to refute the honourable member for Bruce from the mouth of the House Steward. That was the inference which he drew from the theatrical performance which the Premier indulged in. He (Mr. Bell) frequently heard things said by a Minister to a gentleman near him, and expressions from member to member, and of course ignored them; but, when the Premier proceeded to perform in that manner, he should explain that the drama was a private one, and not a public performance.

Sir R. STOUT only wanted to say a few words. He was exceedingly pained by what he had heard that afternoon. It was not usual to bring up private matters such as had been brought up that afternoon, and he thought it would have been more consonant with the dignity of the Premier and the dignity of the House if the Premier had given a different reply from that which he had given to the honourable member for New Plymouth. To run and ask what a man paid for his dinner was inconsistent with the dignity of that House. If the Premier wished to stop all refreshments at Bellamy's, he, as a member of the House Committee, ought to have them stopped. He would not say more, but he thought that by next day the Premier would regret what he had done that afternoon. As to the honourable member for New Plymouth, he did not know whether time would permit, but he hoped that honourable gentleman would also regret what he had said. As to the return of Civil servants, he thought the amendment suggested by the Premier should be accepted. He could only say he was convinced the Civil Service Reform Act of 1886 had not been carried out. He did not blame this or the previous Government; but this non-carrying-out of this Act was entirely unfair. They were training young people to believe they would all have equal chances, and they ought only to allow those who passed their examination by competition to receive appointments. It was unfair that those who had not passed a competitive examination, or who had not got into the Service by the proper door, should be kept in the Service. There were other motions on the Order Paper, and he hoped honourable members would allow the Premier's amendment to be put and to be accepted, in order that the House might proceed to other business.

5.0. Mr. ALLEN was understood to say, with reference to the remarks that

had fallen from the honourable member for New Plymouth that afternoon, that when that honourable gentleman spoke as he did then they generally looked to the Order Paper to find the reasons for it. He wanted to make one or two remarks with regard to something that had fallen both from the honourable member for New Plymouth and the Premier with reference to the banquet which was held on Saturday evening last. He desired to say that, wherever the Premier obtained the first information they had from him on the subject, it was in two respects absolutely incorrect. The Premier told the House that a certain amount—namely, £1 5s. each—was to be charged by the Steward to those attending the banquet. He (Mr. Allen) challenged that statement at the time; and the Premier, after receiving further information, admitted he was wrong. The Premier made another statement which was not correct, and which, in justice to those who were there, should also be rectified. The honourable gentleman said that a loss would be made by the House Steward upon the entertainment given the other evening.

Mr. SEDDON had said this: If what he had been informed was correct, the charge was to be £1 5s.; if this were so there would be a loss. But when he ascertained direct from the Steward the amount that was charged, he said there would not be a loss.

Mr. ALLEN said, now they had two admissions, that the Premier was incorrect in both statements he had made. It was not £1 5s. that was intended to be charged, and no loss, but, on the contrary, a profit, would be made. Now, he did think it was unfair that the Premier should come down and, upon hearsay evidence, make such statements as he had made that afternoon without any proof, when proof concerning them could easily have been had—which proof he had subsequently got, and which had shown him to be absolutely and entirely wrong in the statements he had made. He did not know what object the honourable gentleman had in making that statement. If he wanted to have a little political triumph he was welcome to it, if it was satisfactory to himself; but he (Mr. Allen) thought it was a mean, unkind, and ungenerous action, and he thought the honourable gentleman himself would think it to be so when he reflected, as he must reflect afterwards, on the statements he had made on such shadowy evidence. He might say, with regard to the banquet the other evening, it had taken place in accordance with the regular rule of the House Committee, which was, that on the days that the House was not sitting members might entertain their friends at Bellamy's. And as long as Bellamy's existed and as long as that rule was there, surely everybody had an equal right. It was upon that understanding that certain strangers were invited to Bellamy's on Saturday evening. If the House Committee abolished the rule permitting friends to be invited on days the House was not sitting, then they would all know what to do. At any rate, the rule was as he had stated, and so long as the rule existed they

Mr. Allen

were entitled to invite their friends on the conditions laid down. With regard to the amendment proposed, he thought it but right that they should pass the motion as amended; then they would obtain the information with regard to this year, and to previous years as well, and he did not see why they should not have the whole information. He was as glad to find out the delinquencies of one Administration as of another Administration. Where there had been any wrong-dealing as regarded administration he did not care what Ministry was in power; if they were doing wrong, whether they belonged to his side of the House or to the other side, it was his duty as a representative of the country to find it out; and he asked honourable members on the other side of the House to take up the same position. It was a fair, right, and proper position to take up. If that were so, he asked for their support for those who were asking for information on this and other matters, as their only desire was to find out honestly what was the condition of things as regarded the Civil Service, and as regarded the administration generally.

Mr. W. HUTCHISON wished to say only one word on a portion of this debate. The honourable member for Taranaki was a privileged jester, but he (Mr. Hutchison) hoped that there were not many honourable members on the popular side of the House who had any sympathy with his remarks on the recent banquet. Speaking for himself, at all events,—and he believed he spoke for others as well,—he saw no objection to such a gathering on an off day in the Parliament Buildings, and the adverse criticism on it appeared to him at once petty and mean. Perhaps he could say so with as much freedom as most members of the House, inasmuch as his opinions were probably more advanced than those of honourable members generally.

Mr. REEVES was going to say rather more than one word; but, after all, only a few brief sentences. In that House, a session or two ago he was charged with committing a breach of the privileges of Parliament because he had the audacity to address a public meeting in Wellington, while Parliament was sitting, on matters which were then exciting some feeling in the House itself. He did not in the least intend to suggest to the House that honourable gentlemen on the other side should be precluded from entertaining their friends as often as they liked, and when and where they liked; and, as regarded the question of expense, that was a question as between them and the Steward and the House Committee. Provided that Bellamy's did not lose by it, let them have as many banquets as they liked. When these banquets took the form of political gatherings he did not in the least degree envy honourable gentlemen over there. He looked upon political banquets as funereal functions consisting of equal parts of sham pleasure and champagne. He did not, on that account, think they ought to pass over this question in silence, nor did he see why his honourable friend the Premier, or the honourable mem-

ber for New Plymouth, should be "sat upon" rather severely, as some honourable gentlemen had attempted to sit upon them, in connection with this question, when they had simply asked for a return showing whether any expense had been incurred at Bellamy's over the banquet. If they were, finally, to admit that political gatherings might be held in these Buildings, in which speeches attacking one side of Parliament might be delivered, very well, let that be understood, and let both sides have a fair chance. For example, if, when public feeling ran rather high on the labour question, the Liberal party should invite a number of gentlemen connected with the trades-unions of the colony to gather under the pohutukawa tree outside the Parliament Buildings to make speeches criticizing honourable members, and to pass resolutions, do not let them be attacked in the future for attempting to overawe Parliament. What was fair for one side was fair for the other, and, while he had not the slightest objection to the banquet that took place on Saturday evening,—and, as far as he was concerned, he would be glad to see those honourable gentlemen have a banquet once a week, if they liked,—all he had to say was, do not let other honourable members in the House make charges against him for having violated the privileges of the House because he dared to address a public meeting in Wellington during session-time. Let them have the right of holding public meetings during the session equally inside and outside the Building, if they liked, and of inviting strangers there to say what they chose about honourable gentlemen also.

Mr. MACKINTOSH objected to banquets of the kind being held within the precincts of the House. If it had been a private meeting he could have no objection to it; but to have the speeches made at that banquet reported in the Press was intolerable. If the Press had not been present, of course the gentlemen who attended the banquet might say what they liked. He trusted the rule permitting meetings of this kind would be altered, so that no occurrence of the same nature would take place in future. He remembered the circumstance referred to by the Minister of Education, when he addressed a public meeting in this town, for which he was severely censured, as Parliament was then in session. He thought it was not fair at the time; but when it came to political gatherings held within the precincts of the House, where the Press was invited, and where offensive language was made use of, and reflections cast upon the Government, and upon the party which was the strongest in the House, he said it was highly unbecoming, and should not be allowed.

Major HARRIS would not have stood up only it appeared to him that a wrong impression would be created in the country in consequence of some remarks which had been made that afternoon. It was stated that the meeting was continued until two o'clock in the morning. He did not know whether this was correct or not, and he would not like it to be thought that he was one of the parties there

until two in the morning. There had been nothing said up to the present time to show that there happened to be any particular persons in the House who were there. All he had to say was that he was not present at that meeting. He did object that speeches made under such circumstances should have been made public, but he would not have objected if everything that had passed at that meeting had been made public. However, it was only the speeches that had been made public. If all that passed had been made public he would have been perfectly satisfied, he dared say. As one of the House Committee, he knew nothing of this meeting but what he had heard since. No application was made to the Committee, so far as he knew, and, consequently, the Committee were not responsible at all.

Mr. SEDDON desired to make a personal explanation in order to set himself right, so that there should be no mistake about it. It was with reference to the statement he had made, and which had been put before the House in an entirely wrong light by the honourable member for Bruce. What he (Mr. Seddon) had said was this: If there was a loss through the course taken by a Government officer it was his duty to inquire into it. At that he stopped. He said nothing more and nothing less. He thought it his duty to make that explanation.

Mr. BUCHANAN was not present when the Premier spoke; but, as he had now explained what he did then say, he (Mr. Buchanan) expressed his very great regret that he should have used any such language. The honourable gentleman had no right to assume that a Government officer had committed any act which would have involved the House Committee in a loss. If the honourable gentleman could not see the miserably bad taste of what he had said, he was very sorry for the honourable gentleman.

Mr. HALL did not make any objection to a political party having a banquet or enjoying themselves in any way they might think proper, but he would like to remind the House that they were divided on the question as to whether intoxicating drinks should continue to be sold at Bellamy's. A majority of the House decided that intoxicating liquors should not be sold, but immediately afterwards that was set aside by a motion on a report from the House Committee. It appeared to him that it was never intended at that time that the sale of intoxicating liquors should be extended to two o'clock on Sunday morning to people not belonging to the House. He was very much surprised to find no temperance man protesting against this. If the honourable member for Wellington City had used any other expression than those he used he (Mr. Hall) would have been pleased; but what did that honourable gentleman say? Only that he was sorry the matter had been brought before the House. He was of opinion that that honourable gentleman would not have been sorry to see the matter brought up if the Liberal party had been con-

cerned in the banquet. They would then have had it said that Bellamy's was competing against the publichouses in Wellington. The licensees in the town expected to get the custom of outside people, and the House should not maintain an institution to go into competition with them. It was a disgrace to the House that it should allow any authority, either political or otherwise, to hold a banquet on Sunday morning, against the rules of the House, and against the law of the country in regard to the sale of intoxicating liquors; and he, personally, would do all in his power to prevent it in the future.

Mr. GREEN said the last speaker had taken it on himself to say that something was a disgrace. He did not inform the House that he was speaking within his own knowledge; and it would have been better had he confined himself to facts within his knowledge.

Mr. HALL.—I said, if the report were true.

Mr. GREEN thought it a great pity honourable members should speak about "ifs" and "buts." It had been stated by members that it was a great pity that any members should assemble in the House till two o'clock on Sunday morning. He had not heard that any one had the temerity to say that gentlemen remained at the banquet till two o'clock, and he could assure the House the honourable gentleman was not speaking in accordance with facts. He also said that he took very great exception to intoxicating liquors being used. He (Mr. Green) took upon himself to say that the honourable gentleman had no knowledge of whether intoxicating liquors were drunk or sold; and he thought it would be better, when honourable members wished to take exception to anything, that they should make themselves acquainted with what really took place. He was present at the banquet, and took leave to say that it was not extended beyond twelve o'clock.

Hon. MEMBERS.—What?

Mr. GREEN was speaking within his knowledge in saying that the banquet terminated at twelve. If any gentleman who was not present said anything different, the rules of the House would not allow him to characterize such a statement as that would be. It was also objected that the House should not be used for this purpose. Was it not a rule that was followed for very many years—ever since he had had any knowledge of Parliament? He had found it the rule when he first came to the House, many years ago, that when the House was not sitting members were permitted—and he thought it was generally considered rather a laudable thing—to invite their friends to dine with them on Saturdays and Mondays. The same rule obtained now, so far as he was aware, and, although there was rather a larger number at the gathering on Saturday than he had seen during this Parliament, at any rate he would say that the old members of the House in days gone by had many times seen very many more sit down to dinner at Bellamy's on a Saturday than on this occasion that they had heard so much about. It appeared to him that

those who took exception were actuated by feelings which actuated the last speaker in connection with the intoxicating liquors that were consumed. If it was not for that reason, he did not care to inquire what their feelings might be, because there was very little difference between the proceedings on the previous Saturday night and what had taken place on many Saturday nights in previous Parliaments, extending to a period long before he had the honour of a seat in the House. He very much regretted that those who were not present had taken upon themselves to make insinuations, and it must be for some other purpose than taking exception to the banquet that was held on Saturday night.

Mr. R. McKENZIE had not intended to go into the debate, because he considered it to be very frivolous. But, with reference to what the honourable member for Wairarapa said—that it ought to be beneath the Premier's dignity to refer to these matters—that was a debatable question. The Premier and also those on his side of the House were supposed to look after the good government of the colony. He was not going to inquire, like the senior member for Wellington City, what these gentlemen paid for the dinner, or whether they paid at all. But he certainly protested against the language used at that meeting; and also against reporters being introduced into the room, so that that language was spread all over the colony. He did not consider the House Committee were justified in allowing such a thing to happen. With reference to the motion under discussion, he believed there was a great deal in the remark made by the honourable member for the Grey when he stated that a great many returns were asked for by the honourable member for Wellington City (Mr. Duthie) for the purpose of giving employment to his friends. The honourable member was notorious for asking for all kinds of returns in the House, and what for no man could say—in fact, he could not say himself. He was sure that the return asked for now would be of no practical public utility; and he therefore hoped the Government would not grant it.

Mr. MEREDITH said, in reference to the banquet, he thought the honourable gentlemen on the Opposition benches, in entertaining their friends, were within their rights. From time immemorial such a custom had existed, and the supporters of the Government had been in the habit of meeting on Saturday evenings and enjoying themselves—whether it was called a banquet, or conversazione, or by any other name, it did not signify. But what he did take exception to was the political speeches delivered on that occasion: not but that the gentlemen assembled had a perfect right to deliver themselves on matters affecting the welfare of the colony—but he did not think a declaration of war against the present Government should have been made during the sitting of the House and within the precincts of Parliament. If honourable gentlemen chose to express views on leading questions affecting the country, it was perfectly competent for them to meet in

Mr. Hall

any hall in the city and do so. He looked at the matter in this way: During the Franco-German war there was a considerable agitation amongst military men in England in favour of England identifying herself with France, particularly so during the siege of Paris. What would England have thought, what would the British Press have thought, and what editorial articles would have followed, if half a dozen leading Frenchmen had, in Exeter Hall, endeavoured to encourage this military feeling, against the wishes of the country? Or, again, during the time England was at war with France, what would have been thought of a dozen men from France declaring war against England, in Exeter Hall? He did not think England would stand that for a moment. He was happy to hear from Mr. Green, who no doubt spoke with authority, that the banquet was not extended to Sunday morning: he was glad it was contradicted, so that it should not go forth to the country that the Legislature broke the Sabbath.

Mr. HALL rose to make a personal explanation. The honourable gentleman stated that the banquet ceased at twelve; he had been credibly informed that the drinking continued till two.

Mr. MASSEY had no wish to take part in the discussion, because he thought the whole discussion was a storm in a teacup, and a great waste of time, and also an exhibition of very bad taste on the part of certain honourable members. A statement had been made that the banquet continued till two o'clock on Sunday morning. He was present, and could vouch for the statement of the honourable member for Waikouaiti. The last speaker at the banquet was on his legs at twelve o'clock, and concluded a few minutes after, and the meeting then broke up. It seemed to him that there was an evident intention on the part of certain very honourable members to give the public the impression that drinking went on until two o'clock. He simply took the opportunity of denying, and correcting, the statement that had been made.

Mr. McLACHLAN said he lived in close proximity to the Buildings, and had seen the gentlemen who were present at the banquet going home at twelve o'clock. What he believed was that the real grievance was that the invitations were not general. If all honourable gentlemen had been present, no fault would have been found with the speeches.

The hour of half-past five having arrived, Mr. SPEAKER left the chair.

HOUSE RESUMED.

Mr. SPEAKER resumed the chair at half-past seven o'clock.

ELECTIVE EXECUTIVE BILL.

7.30. Major STEWARD.—Sir, the Bill which I have now the honour to submit to this House deals with a very large and important question, and one which, I think, in view of the rapid growth of public opinion, will eventually, and perhaps soon, have to be sub-

mitted to this House by the Government of the day. The fact of its not being submitted to the House as a Government measure now, but by a private member, is a sufficient answer to those who would seek to place private members in the position of mere counters, deprived of the right of initiation, and able only to give their votes upon measures submitted by the Government that may happen to be in power. Some of the largest reforms that have ever been effected have been made at the instance of private members, and, though this Bill should not pass to-night, I feel perfectly certain the day is not far distant when the colony will ask that some such measure as this shall be passed. It is the function of private members to express the inchoate ideas of the public, and to bring under the examination of this House questions which have been raised in the country. Under those conditions, the fittest will survive, and that which is not fit will be cast aside and will not survive the ordeal in this House. This, Sir, is one of the questions which have to be brought before the House in this way. A private member is, as it were, the sower of the seed, though it is very seldom that he himself reaps the harvest; but, if the harvest accrue, no matter who may gather it, he may be well content. Sir, I am quite conscious that there are members in this House who could take charge of this measure far better than I can possibly hope to do; but I make no apology for having brought it forward, first, because, with the exception of yourself, I have sat in this House some years longer than any other member of the House, and because during these years I have had more opportunity of seeing what are the effects of party government than any other honourable member sitting here. My second reason is that, although I was not the first to raise this question in the country—the honourable member for Wellington City (Sir R. Stout) raised the question many years ago; then, an honourable member from Southland, more than twenty years ago, wrote very exhaustively on this question in the *Southland News*—a copy of one of his letters is in my possession at this moment—yet I was the first member to raise the question within the walls of this Legislature. In 1888 I tabled a series of resolutions, which, owing to the condition of public business, never came on for discussion. In 1889 I called together those honourable gentlemen who, I happened to know, sympathized with those resolutions. We met together, to the number of twenty-three, and discussed the question, and, after considering what would be the wisest policy, it was agreed that it would be well to defer any action until immediately before the general elections, and then to test the matter when it would be fresh before the minds of the electors. Accordingly, in the year 1890, I called a meeting, which was attended by twenty-six members, who formed a working committee of sixteen, and the result of our efforts was to draw up a resolution to be presented in this House, asking for the appointment of a Committee to

consider this question of party government. We divided the work, so that there should be no repetition of speeches and each member should keep to his own particular department. You were in the chair, Sir, at that time; and when the resolution was submitted, on the question of going into Committee of Supply, a debate took place, and, although that opportunity was not favourable to the carrying of an abstract proposition,—for the reason that a Government, on moving to go into Committee of Supply, necessarily opposes an amendment,—notwithstanding that fact, we nearly carried our resolution. The division was twenty-seven to twenty-five—it will be found in *Hansard*, Volume 69, page 55—and, as I say, notwithstanding the fact that we had to move against Supply, we were within two votes of carrying the resolution. There are now only eighteen members who voted on that occasion at present in this House. Ten of those members voted with the “Ayes” and eight with the “Noes.” In the year 1891 the House did me the honour to put me in the position which you now so well and worthily occupy. It therefore followed that I was unable to take any active part in the House with regard to matters such as this. Mr. O’Conor, who was at that time member for the Buller, consulted me in regard to the subject, and he afterwards brought in a resolution asking for a Committee; and that Committee was granted by the House. The report of the Committee will be found in Volume IV. of the Appendices to the Journals, 1891. That report was never discussed in this House, and in the following year no further effort was made. But in 1893, being the year just before the general election, the honourable member brought in a Bill under the same title as that which I am now moving, but that Bill never came up for second reading. This year the honourable member for Selwyn moved for and obtained a Committee, which has already reported to this House, and has affirmed that the present condition of things is not satisfactory, and has suggested that this particular Bill, if it be affirmed by the House, should be referred to the Committee for its consideration. Now, the fact that two Committees of this House have affirmed, in different years, the same proposition—namely, that the present system of party government is unsatisfactory, and that there ought to be a remedy devised—is, I think, a matter which deserves consideration; and I believe that public opinion is fast arriving, if it has not already arrived, at the conclusion that the change proposed by this Bill is one which is required in the interests of the good government of the country. It is not only a significant fact that two Committees of this House in different years have affirmed this proposition, but in other colonies, and in other parts of the world, the same thing is going on, for I notice that a Royal Commission has been issued in an adjoining colony. That Commission has reported; and, although it is true it has not affirmed the question of an elective Executive, it has affirmed several of the proposi-

Major Steward

tions in the Bill which I have now the honour to present to the House. The Chairman of that Commission, Mr. Best, a member of the Legislative Assembly of Victoria, drew up a Bill very much on the lines of this Bill, and the full text of it was published in the *Melbourne Age* some time in April—I cannot at the moment remember the exact day. Well, seeing that not only in this House, in different years, has the proposal for a change been affirmed, but also in the adjoining colony efforts are being made in this direction, I think it is fair to argue that this is a matter which ought to meet with every consideration by this House. The report which was presented by Mr. O’Conor in 1891 quoted some very excellent authorities with regard to this question, and, if honourable members have not read that paper, I hope they will look it up. It is Parliamentary Paper I.—10, of Volume IV., 1891. I will simply cite a few authorities which, I think, go very far to prove my case. The Committee itself reported as follows:—

“1. Your Committee have the honour to report that, in their opinion, many and very serious evils are inseparably connected with, and spring from, the system of party government here; that it is unsuited to such a colony as New Zealand; and that in other colonies, and even in England, similar evils have been felt, varying only in degree, consequent upon surrounding circumstances and different phases of the system.

“7. The rule that a Ministry must be unanimous in all its decisions, that each member is responsible for the actions of the whole, and the whole for the actions of each member, is calculated to destroy independence of thought and action, and not unfrequently results in the exclusion of valuable men from a Ministry.

“8. The constitutional practice of a Ministry resigning when any important measure which it has introduced has been rejected has led to the mischievous practice of allowing Bills to drop whenever their passage becomes doubtful, thus compelling the Ministry to become followers, rather than wise and courageous leaders; and it almost necessarily compels a Ministry, under the instinct of self-preservation, to pander to any popular delusion of the hour, instead of making a stand against short-sighted popular impulses.

“9. But what the colonies have most to deplore is the fact that each Ministry is tempted to entrench its position and to buy off opposition by the expenditure of public money, a proceeding which has been felt to answer the double purpose of making the work pleasant at the time, and difficult to any succeeding Ministry taking office with the intention of pursuing a more prudent and honest policy.

“10. In the opinion of your Committee the most suitable model for our imitation will be found in the present government of the Swiss Federation.

“The recommendations which your Committee offer under the head of ‘Executive

Reform' are intended to secure the following advantages :—

"I. That the Parliament may be enabled to exercise a real supervision and control over all legislative and administrative action.

"II. That the Executive may be selected by the Parliament itself in a manner likely to secure the services of the men best suited to the work, and at the same time so place them that they can seek the public welfare, untrammelled by party considerations and undegraded by the practice of stratagems to secure their own positions.

"III. That the representatives of the people may have freedom to vote according to their unbiassed opinions, without the necessity of supporting what they believe to be wrong or opposing what they believe to be right for the purpose of serving party interests.

"IV. That the people of the colony may be able to look up to the Ministry as men engaged in watching over their interests, and not as men waging party warfare.

"V. That the people of the colony may have confidence in the administration of public affairs, take an intelligent interest in the proceedings in the Legislature, and thus create a healthy public opinion on public affairs, and the part taken by their representatives.

"With these objects in view, your Committee submit the following outline of the Constitution which they have agreed to recommend."

Then the Committee submitted certain suggestions with a view to carrying out those principles and views. I have already said that this year's Committee reported in the same direction. This is the report that was presented to the House a few days ago :—

"1. That the Committee consider that party government, as it exists in New Zealand, is not adapted to obtain the best results in government, and that a change is requisite.

"2. That, as the Hon. Major Steward has a Bill now before the House affirming the general principle of an elective Executive, the Committee, approving of the principle of the Bill, suggest that, if it passes a second reading, it should be referred to this Committee for consideration."

It will be seen, then, that the result of the steps taken in this House on this question has been to affirm all the principal provisions of the Bill; and the authorities I will now cite show that the same opinion has been arrived at in other parts of the world :—

"I believe that party, instead of being a machinery necessary to the existence of free government, is its most dangerous foe, and that in order to get anything which really deserves the name of Republican Government we must destroy party altogether."—(Stickney, "A True Republic.")

"I think it is evident that the people are tired of the system, and that it will have to be got rid of by one way or another in the course of time."—(T. E. Kebbel, *Nineteenth Century*, 1888.)

"No one can view without some feeling of disgust the cavilling and bickering, the malign-

ing misrepresentation and calumny, which pass for political criticism, and which are the chief articles of party warfare."—(Williams, "Party and Patriotism.")

"One of the great blots upon our system of government is the sustained obstruction practised by those out of office against legislative or other measures proposed by those in office."—(Crump, "Formation of Political Opinion.")

"The party system, whereof the strangeness is concealed from modern Englishmen only by the force of habit, leads, as has been well said, to this result: The sixteen cleverest men in Parliament are set to govern the country, whilst the sixteen next cleverest men are employed in hindering the work of government; the talents which should be enlisted in the services of the nation neutralise each other, and are rendered almost useless."—(*Edinburgh Review*, 1890.)

"At first they would probably wonder that it could ever have succeeded at all, and that a system by which the Empire had been brought to the very verge of ruin before statesmen could be roused to discriminate between their major and their minor obligations should have been tolerated for a day by a nation which prides itself on its knowledge of the art of government. . . . Party has, by many great statesmen, been considered only an accident, not an essential, of our English form of Government."—(Speech by Lord Hartington, *Quarterly Review*, 1886.)

"If free government can be carried on in no other way, the prospect is dark, for party is apparently doomed alike by morality and by the growing tendencies of the age. But there is obviously one other way at least in which free government can be carried on. Instead of making office the prize of a perpetual faction-fight, the members of the Executive Council of State may be regularly elected by the members of the Legislature for a certain term under such a system with regard to the rotation of vacancies as may at once secure sufficient harmony between the two bodies and a sufficient continuity in the Executive Government. The responsibility of the Executive for the decisions of the Legislature, and its obligation to resign upon every legislative defeat, which is a mere accident of English history, and devoid of rational foundation, would then cease. The Legislature and the Executive would be at liberty each to do its own work. The Executive would be national, and would receive the general support of the community instead of being an object of organized hostility to half of it; it would be stable instead of being, as it is now throughout Europe, ephemeral as well as weak. Responsibility on the part of its members instead of being diminished would be increased."—(Professor Goldwin Smith, *Contemporary Review*, 1885.)

"Had government by party not come into existence under exceptional circumstances; had it not been the slow growth of generations; had it not been associated with the names of our most eminent men, and with some of the proudest events of our history, and almost

become a part of our national life, it would find few defenders amongst us at the present day. The system is tolerated because of old associations, and because we have come to think that it is in some way an essential part of our time-honoured Constitution; but, if it were now for the first time proposed for our acceptance, I venture to say that it would not recommend itself either to the intelligence or to the moral sense of the community.

"The nomination of the Executive by Parliament would, in my opinion, bring about a vast and beneficial change in the government of the country. It would put an end to the dominating influence of the Premier, and destroy the unity of the Cabinet. Parliament could then remove at pleasure any Minister whose conduct it disapproved of. It would have the selection of Ministers in its own hands, and the best men from both sides of the House would be eligible for office in the same way as the Speaker is now. The selection would not be from one section of Parliament, but from all sections, and the Ministry would represent all shades of opinion. At present one-half of the best men in Parliament are permanently excluded from office. There would also be a possibility of differentiating the functions of administration and legislation. Both kinds of functions are now exercised by the Cabinet. Ministers attempt too much when they undertake to administer the affairs and at the same time to provide legislative measures for a great empire. The functions of administration are sufficiently onerous and important to engage their undivided attention. By relieving them of the business of legislation, which properly belongs to Parliament, there would be some chance of obtaining an efficient system of departmental supervision, while by leaving Parliament unhampered by considerations of changes of Government it would be able to devote itself zealously to the work of legislation. If the heads of departments found it necessary to recommend legislation, their proposals would, no doubt, be impartially considered by Parliament. In this as in other matters Ministers would take their instructions from Parliament, not Parliament from Ministers, as at present. Probably it might be necessary, in order to prevent the time of the House being wasted in discussing the various proposals which might be introduced by private members, to appoint a Legislative Committee to examine and report, as is now done in France and in several Continental States where parliamentary government exists. The whole system of party government could, in this manner, be quietly and effectually got rid of. There would be no striking at Ministers through their policy; no rejecting of good measures in order to bring about a change of Government. Members would be in a position to discuss measures on their merits, or, at all events, without permitting party questions to influence them. There would be no weak Governments, and no danger to the liberties of the people from too strong ones. As Ministers would not be appointed because they belonged to a party,

Major Steward

there would be no motive for turning them out of office. They would be in deed and in truth the ministers, not the masters, of Parliament." — (Syme, "Representative Government in England.")

In Cox's work on "Institutions of the English Government," the following passage occurs:—

"Party diminishes responsibility by dividing it; subjects the Executive to sudden and dangerous changes; it confers office on the wise and the upright together with the incompetent and corrupt, and in turn ejects them from power simultaneously; degrades politics from a science to a warfare, assigning public office not to the ablest men necessarily, but to those who have the greatest political power."

I shall quote one more authority, from the *Melbourne Age*, and this is the last quotation with which I shall trouble the House. It is contained in an article of the 16th April last. An able article in that paper in reference to the question of party government contains, amongst other things, the following passage, which I will ask the House to permit me to read:—

"'Party' means simply a struggle for place and power, and exhibits itself in that everlasting battle between the 'ins' and the 'outs' which has operated so disastrously on the fortunes of the country. . . . One of the great evils of the existing system is that it does not secure the best available man for each office. When a Premier is constructing a Cabinet the last thing he thinks of in choosing his colleagues is their fitness for the offices for which he designs them. The considerations are of quite a different kind. The nominee must, in the first place, have a tolerably secure seat. . . . Another desideratum is that he shall be popular in the House—that is to say, that he has a strong body of personal friends who will be likely to support the new Administration for his sake, and quite apart from the merits of its policy. . . . There is not a man in the House who does not deem himself to have 'claims,' although, perhaps, the members who are really fit for inclusion in the Government may be counted on one set of fingers. This is an evil of no small magnitude, since it deprives the community of the services of its best men. Nor do the evils of the present system stop here. At least half the members who voted for the expulsion of one Government and the installation of another are disappointed, and ready, on the first opportunity, to recommence the intrigue for a fresh shuffle of the cards. It may safely be said that at least half the time and three-fourths of the energy of the Legislative Assembly are devoted to this everlasting struggle for possession of the Treasury benches, and the work of the country is proportionately neglected. . . . It is readily conceivable that in such circumstances a Ministry is tempted to conciliate support by bestowing personal favours upon honourable members. It is true that such favours are only indirectly conferred. They consist of concessions to constituents or to constituencies, and thus contribute to maintain the popularity of the members in their respective districts. It

is needless to say that these concessions are not always in accordance with the interests of the community as a whole."

The evils of the existing system of party government being thus established, it is natural to turn for the remedy to the system of an elective Executive, which has worked so successfully in Switzerland and elsewhere. That

8.0. system is in operation in some of the States of the great American Republic, as, for instance, in Indiana, where the Governor, Lieutenant-Governor, Secretary of State, Treasurer, Auditor, Attorney-General, and Superintendent of Public Instruction are elected by popular vote; and in Maine, where the Governor and his Council of seven are chosen by the two Houses of the State Parliament. But the model to which reformers who desire to bring about the improvement of our governmental system most naturally turn is that of Switzerland, where the elective system has now stood, with entire success, the test of nearly half a century's experience. Under the Constitution of 1848, revised and improved in 1874, the Federal Council, which, in the words of Sir Francis Adams, "is in the nature of an Executive Committee," is elected by the two Chambers—the National Council, of 145 members, elected by manhood suffrage; and the Council of States, of 44 members, representing the cantons, elected, in most cases, by the legislative bodies, but in some by the people. The Federal Council—the Executive—consists of seven members, who are chosen for three years, being the same term as that for which the two Houses of the Legislature are elected. The President of the Executive and the Vice-President are chosen by the Legislature, and hold those positions for one year only, being succeeded by other members of the Executive. At page 58 of his interesting work on "The Swiss Confederation" Sir Francis Adams writes,—

"All the members have the right to speak in either Chamber, of which they avail themselves whenever their presence is required, or, indeed, whenever they wish to take part in the debates, but they cannot vote.

"Perhaps the most remarkable sight is that which occasionally occurs when a debate arises in either Chamber upon a question where the difference of opinion of members of the Federal Council is very marked, and it has happened that two of the body have risen in succession to support dissimilar views. The debate once over, no particular friction results between the two colleagues; both victor and vanquished may spend the evening at the same café, continue their discussion amicably or not at all, and they will sit serenely together on the morrow in Cabinet Council as if nothing in particular had happened.

"The members of the Federal Council are re-eligible, and, in point of fact, the same individuals remain in office for a number of years, notwithstanding the existence of well-known differences among themselves, and between some of them and a majority in the Assembly.

"There have hitherto been two instances of

a member willing to serve not being re-elected; but from time to time some naturally resign—one for a more lucrative post, another to become head of a diplomatic mission, another from a desire to retire into private life.

"The Federal Council, having been elected by the Federal Assembly for three years, cannot be dissolved by that body in the interim, any more than it can itself dissolve the Assembly. It does not in any way depend upon the majority in the Assembly. Its members, each in his own department, prepare Bills and resolutions, either suggested by one of the Chambers or of their own initiative, and those measures, when agreed to by the Council or even by a majority of its members, are submitted to the Chambers, who deal with them in the manner described.

"This Council does not consist, as is the general rule in the English Cabinet, of a body of men holding similar views. The majority at present no doubt belong politically to the Left, which party has the majority in the Chambers; but there are also some who hold more Conservative views, and amongst these one Moderate Roman Catholic, who has served for many years. There is also one Old Catholic; but there has never been an Ultramontane Roman Catholic since the creation of the Council in 1848. The practical harmony between the members is secured by the minority giving way to the majority, if the whole body cannot agree among themselves to a compromise.

"It will thus be seen that the election of the Federal Councillors cannot accurately be termed a purely party business, nor do they represent the majority in the Assembly; otherwise they would now be all either Democrats or Radicals. There is a certain understanding—one might almost say a certain feeling of fair-play—which leads the majority in the Chambers to concede the principle that other parties should at least be represented in the Executive Government. And, again, a Conservative Vice-President, who is almost certain in any case to be elected President for the ensuing year, often succeeds to that office by an almost unanimous vote.

"Collisions between the Federal Council and the Federal Assembly do not exist. If any measure proposed by the former is rejected by both Chambers, or by one, and thus does not become valid, the Federal Council accepts the rejection; it asks for no vote of confidence, nor does anything ensue in the shape of what we call a Ministerial crisis. Similarly, there is no question of a dissolution of the Chambers when the people reject measures passed by them. The Federal authorities, whether legislative or executive, being chosen for a fixed term, remain at their posts during that term."

Again, at page 274 of the same work I read,—

"When a triennial election takes place it is customary to leave the members of the Federal Council unmolested if they have done their duty. Hence, men like Herr Welti, Herr Hertenstein, and Herr Hammer have never

been removed, although they owed their elections originally to the Centre, now reduced to a mere handful. This system has the evident advantage of great continuity in the Executive Government, whilst a sufficient change is introduced by the by-elections. The Federal Councillors are thus not changed *en bloc* upon every fluctuation of party feeling, and yet the body cannot be said to be really out of harmony with the Chambers."

The Constitution of Switzerland has been devised in the presence of conditions of exceptional difficulty, not the least formidable of which is the fact that as many sections of the people speak four different languages, three of these—German, French, and Italian—being spoken in the Legislature, sometimes in the course of the same debate; yet that Constitution works with remarkable smoothness and success, and the Confederation presents the spectacle of a united, independent, free, law-abiding, and educated people, for it is averred to be "a well-authenticated fact that every child in Switzerland who is not mentally incapacitated is able to read and write"; while among its citizens, who are all politically equal, there is "no marked hostility between rich and poor," "there is no display of great luxury, there are no magnates in the land, and charity is not wanting towards the poorer on the part of those who are better off."

"The members of the Federal Council"—again to quote from Sir Francis Adams's work—"yield to no other Government in Europe in devotion to their country, in incessant hard work for a poor salary, and in thorough honesty and incorruptibility. A diplomatist, who knew them well and appreciated their good qualities, wrote that they aptly reminded him of a characteristic industry of their own country—that of watchmaking. For, having to deal with very minute and intricate affairs, their attention is unremittingly engaged by the most delicate mechanism of government, by the wheels within wheels of federal and cantonal attributes, by the most careful balancing of relations between contending sects and Churches, and by endeavours to preserve the proper counterpoise between two (French and German), not to say three (the third being Italian), nationalities. Their task is thus essentially one of constant vigilance and careful supervision."

That the Swiss Executive is able successfully to carry on the work of government under circumstances of such exceptional difficulty must be attributed no less to the system under which it is created than to the qualities of its members. Indeed—yet once more to cite the same authority, page 273,—

"The nature and attributes of the Federal Council, or Executive authority, are particularly worthy of attention; and Swiss statesmen appear, by its creation, to have gone far towards solving that important problem which has puzzled other democratic countries—viz., how to combine an efficient Executive with democratic Constitutions."

In drafting my Bill, I have, of course, had in

Major Steward

view the Swiss model, but I have not followed it altogether. I have also taken into consideration the Bill introduced in this Parliament three years ago by Mr. O'Connor, and also that proposed by Mr. Best in Victoria. Mr. O'Connor proposed to introduce the Hare system in the mode of election. Whatever may be said in favour of the Hare system, there is also something to be said against it. To have introduced too many innovations in a Bill of this kind would only render it more difficult to pass the measure. I therefore have endeavoured to simplify the measure as much as possible by simply asking the House to affirm that, instead of the Government being elected mediately through one man, the Executive should be elected directly by the House. Then, in both cases—that is, in Mr. O'Connor's Bill and in Mr. Best's Bill—it was proposed, as in Switzerland, to allow of the selection of members of the Executive not only from among members of the Legislature, but from outside the Legislature. That, again, would have been a new departure, and, I am afraid, would have complicated the issue. I therefore have dropped that also. The one main point which I ask the House to affirm is this: that the Executive shall be elected by the House direct and for a fixed period. I have put a provision in the Bill under which it will be in the power of the House to remove any one member, two or more members, or the whole Executive, by a simple method—not the method of a want-of-confidence motion, carried after a protracted and bitter debate, but by requisition for a ballot. I am willing to abandon that if needful, the great point being that the Ministers should be brought into direct relations with the House, as they are not now, and that the House itself should be entirely free to vote on all questions that come before it, irrespective of whether that vote will affect the political party or not. I come now to the proposals of the Bill itself, and then, with a few remarks, I will draw my speech to a close. The proposals of the Bill are very simple. The 1st section is the short title. The 2nd section provides that—

"There shall be six members of the Executive Council holding Ministerial office (hereinafter termed 'Ministers'), and two members of the Executive Council without Ministerial office, who shall together constitute such Executive Council, hereinafter termed 'the Executive.'"

Then comes the proposal in section 3 that the Executive shall be appointed by ballot of the House, nominations being handed in to the Speaker on the day following his own election, and the Speaker is required to fix a time and place for the taking of the vote. Then, further, it is provided, in order to secure that the members of the Executive shall be able to work together, that when the result of the poll is declared any honourable member who has been elected can decline to serve, and in that case a fresh election takes place, the result being that in the last issue six honourable gentlemen are elected who are willing to work together. When they sit upon those benches each of them can bring down any Bill he thinks

fit. He can argue in favour of it, and one of his colleagues who does not agree with the Bill can argue against it, and the effect, if the Bill should be lost, does not necessarily involve the Minister losing his position as a Minister. Therefore every member of the House will be absolutely free to vote on the merits of the case, straight for the Bill or against the Bill, without any complication of the Bill and the man. Now, Sir, what should we gain if the principles of this Bill were accepted? As regards the Ministers collectively—that is, the Executive—we should have them placed in a position of independence, and should remove from them the temptation to intrigue for the purpose of securing support so as to insure their own tenure of office. Then, as regards the Ministers individually, we should have them brought into a position of more direct responsibility to this House and to the country. We should preserve their individuality not only of character but of opinion; we should free them from the now almost necessary dominance of one master mind; and we should make them, as they ought to be, the servants of the House and the country, and not the masters of the House and the country. As regards members of this House generally, we should extricate them from the position which now frequently occurs, of having to vote on confused and complicated issues—of having to vote for measures of which they disapprove lest the effect should be the removal from office of a Ministry in which in the main they have confidence. We should secure that every measure proposed in this House should be dealt with upon its merits, and we should thus make it impossible for members to plead any excuse for voting against their election pledges and the opinions declared to their constituents, because they would not be able to put in the plea that they had voted to save the Government. We should save an enormous waste of time in this House, which is now the necessary consequence of the existing state of things when it is inevitable that one side should be arrayed against the other the moment the standard of party is raised. We should render Parliament capable of doing more work, and of doing it very much more efficiently. We should raise the Government and the Legislature to a higher plane and into a purer atmosphere, and we should thus ennoble and dignify our democracy. Sir, wherever democratic institutions, such as we possess in New Zealand, exist, there is ample evidence that the reform I ask this House now to agree to is a reform that is demanded, for under all such institutions there is a distinct tendency to return, by what logicians call a *circulus vitiosus*, to the same point, to bring about what, for want of a better term, I may describe as a democratic autocracy. You endeavour to get away from the evils of autocratic government: that is the whole theory of all democratic institutions. And what do you do? You do away with them by a state of things under which one man dominates the Cabinet, dominates the House, and dominates the country, and so return to the point you

started from, and you put the Prime Minister in a position in which he is tempted to accept the doctrine of Imperialism, "*L'état, c'est moi.*" Is it not so? Do the honourable member's colleagues differ from him or from his views, what has he got to do?—to threaten to tender his resignation; and as they know that his resignation means their extinction—the removal of the entire Government from office—he therefore becomes entire master of the situation. I do not wish to be understood as referring specially to this colony; my argument applies wherever institutions such as ours exist; and therefore I ask that a Bill such as I now have the honour of presenting to this House should pass, so that we should have a remedy for this autocracy of democracy, which may become quite as mischievous as any other form of one-man government. The principle that underlies the Bill is the principle that underlay the old Saxon Witenagemote—that is to say, the principle of enabling the popular will to have as nearly direct action as possible in the choice of an Executive, and with regard to the passing or rejection of any proposed legislation. That last point involves the adoption of the principle advocated by the honourable member for Inangahua—the principle of the Referendum; but that measure has yet to be dealt with. I think, however, that the first reform ought to be the reform proposed in this Bill—namely, to reform the method of the election of the Executive. I trust this House will take the matter into careful consideration. I do not expect that the Bill will pass to-night, but I shall take a division, and I shall ask honourable gentlemen to record their votes, "Aye" or "No," for or against the Bill; and I say, though I am neither a prophet nor the son of a prophet, that within three or four years—probably at the next general election—the Bill I now have the honour of moving will be one of the leading questions before the public of this colony. I now move the second reading of the Bill.

MR. E. M. SMITH.—I will not let that go by, Sir. I want to explain to the House that I am a political turncoat upon this question. Oh, yes, I have turned my political coat inside out, and I will explain to you why, Sir. I issued a manifesto to my constituents—to those people supporting me, some of the most intelligent people in this colony—and they asked me what was my opinion upon party government. I said that I knew party government had destroyed some of the best public men in New Zealand, and that I was in favour, at the earliest possible opportunity, of substituting some other form of government for party government; and then I went on to give the political history of some of our public men. Well, since then I have grown older, and I have grown a little wiser. I have found out a little of the ins and outs of politics. Now, what would be the result if we passed this Bill? Where would be the great policy initiated by the present Government?

AN HON. MEMBER.—It would be all right.

MR. E. M. SMITH.—Would it be all right?

Some honourable gentlemen would get on the Executive that would not have the confidence of the people. I will explain why I am going to vote against this Bill in the form in which it is drafted and brought before this House at this particular time. I say that the policy indicated by the Government is going to be the

8.30. salvation of this colony, and I will do my "level best" to prevent a change in the Government, or in the members of the Government. I want them to be responsible for that policy. Just fancy a member of this House being on the Executive Government who had denounced already in his speech upon the Financial Statement the proposals contained in the Financial Statement! Could he carry them out? Not at all, Sir. Now, I would ask honourable members to read this Bill carefully. The honourable member has quoted Henry George, and is prepared to live and die by that gentleman's views, whether they are right or wrong. I am not one of this sort, Sir. I think for myself. Now, what would be the result of this Bill? Immediately the members of Parliament were elected they have got to be nominated by ten other members. They have got to deposit their nomination-papers within six days of being returned. The rich may trot round the country and get up organizations, and get the organization to select a nominee, and therefore he is nominated by that particular party for that particular interest. And what chance would the Liberal candidate stand against this man? The nominations would be decided even before the election. That is one bad feature of the Bill, and is enough to kill it in the eyes of the people. Clause 3 of the Bill is as follows:—

"Such Executive shall be appointed as hereinafter provided:—

"(1.) Upon the first assembling of Parliament after each general election, so soon as the House of Representatives shall have elected the Speaker, the members thereof shall proceed to elect five Ministers, and one Executive Councillor without Ministerial office, in manner following:—

"(2.) Nominations of candidates shall be handed in to the Speaker not later than six post meridiem of the day following that upon which he is himself elected, and shall be signed in each case by not less than ten nominators and by the candidate nominated, all of whom must be members of the House of Representatives.

"(3.) If no more than the required number of members be nominated, such members shall be declared elected; but, if there be more than the requisite number of nominations, then the list of members nominated shall be printed on a special Order Paper, to be issued immediately upon the close of the nominations, and the Speaker shall appoint a time (not being less than twenty-four nor more than forty-eight hours after the issue of such list) for the taking of a ballot.

"(4.) The five candidates for Ministerial office, and the candidate for the Executive Councillorship without office, having the highest

Mr. E. M. Smith

number of votes, shall be declared elected; and if there be an equality of votes for any two or more candidates, then a further ballot or ballots shall be taken as regards such candidates until the result shall be decided by a majority: Provided that, upon the result of the election being declared, any member or members elected may decline to serve, and thereupon nomination shall be called for, and, if need be, a ballot shall be taken to fill up the vacancy or vacancies.

"(5.) The Legislative Council shall in like manner elect one Minister, and one Executive Councillor without Ministerial office."

Now, there is direct contradiction. Nominations must be handed to the Speaker, and they must be sent within six clear days, though there may be no Speaker and no House of Assembly. Now, if there was only the number of six nominations sent in, those people would actually be elected before Parliament met.

Hon. MEMBERS.—No.

Mr. E. M. SMITH.—But I say, Yes. There is a nice state of affairs! Yes, there it is in black and white, as plain as printed characters can put it. I say, Mr. Speaker, that if we are to have a change in the form of government it should be before the country. We should have an alteration in the constitution of the country; but, until that does take place,—until it is made one of the main issues, and a direct vote of the people at the end of this Parliament,—I shall not register my vote in favour of this Bill, but I shall vote against it. I have already spoken to my constituents, and to the people of the colony, in the various speeches I have made since Parliament has been assembled, and I am going to stand by that. I supported the Government in their different proposals. I have been up in my district, and have met a large number of my constituents, and they have applauded what I have done; and therefore I am certain, when I stand by the Government to assist them in their policy Bills, to assist them in bringing that policy before the country to make it the law of the land, and to give effect to the getting of cheap money for farmers, which will satisfy farmers, and when we go in for £250,000 to purchase Native lands, which will satisfy the people who want land—I say there are the proper men who have brought this policy into existence. They are the designers of it, and should be intrusted with the administration of it. We know that some of the best things brought forward in this country have been spoiled in the administration of them. The public-works and immigration scheme was spoiled by bad administration, and everything connected with the State will be carried out in the same manner if we do not put the right men into the right place, and when that Government loses the confidence of the representatives of this House we have the right to move a want-of-confidence motion, and we can debate the thing out to the fullest extent, and can remove those gentlemen at any time when they are not doing what we consider in the interests of the people. But this Bill says that when once they are elected they shall

remain there for twelve months. I know that in this colony it has been advisable to change the Government twice in one session. It was in the interests of the country to do so; so the representatives of the country said at the time. These are a few of the reasons I have for opposing this Bill; and I believe this: that we were returned at the last general election on certain well-defined principles; that we were returned to support the Liberal Government—the Government which had proved to the country during the preceding three years of the last Parliament that they were working in the interests of the masses, and not in the interests of the classes. We were returned to support them during this Parliament, at any rate. Now, if this Bill was not to be given effect to until the first session of next Parliament, thus allowing a general election to take place in the meantime, then it would be a different thing.

An Hon. MEMBER.—That is what is intended.

Mr. E. M. SMITH.—If it is carried. Well, it will not be carried. When the division takes place you will be wakened up to realise the position; there is no doubt about it. At any rate, I am only giving my views; you will have an opportunity of giving your views. I will give my vote, and you will give your vote; and when it is decided upon that issue, who will grumble? If I am in a minority I shall bow to the decision of the majority. If you are in a minority I hope you will bow to the decision of the majority also. But I hope I shall be in an overwhelming majority. We have had this on before. I have read articles older and staler than those the honourable gentleman has quoted, and I have read brilliant articles in favour of party government. I know it is party government in the Old Country that has kept the nation and empire together; and I say this: I am going to support the present Ministry until their policy is initiated; and then, when the country finds the great advantages that will accrue from the development of our resources, the settlement of our fertile lands, the proper employment of our intelligent people, with our finances sound, and our loans taken up readily, and these millions of money flowing into this country—these are the reasons why I am going to support the Government. I give the honourable gentleman credit for endeavouring to disseminate his views. There are some men in this country who like to be law reformers. They like to reform the legislation of the country. I do not object to that. We are always on the march, and we shall always be marching on; but this is marching too hurriedly. It will have to be kept back. The time will come when we shall have another form of government; but we are not ripe for it yet. We have got too many young men in this House. They want coaching up, and a little more experience. Of course, I know my political opponents will come down on me like a thousand of bricks when I go back. The best of men change their opinions, and I have changed mine because I

believe it is in the interests of the people, and in the interests of good government; and I am so afraid, at this particular period of the history of the colony, that those very men who would not get returned as Ministers under our present form of government would very likely sneak in under this Bill, that I therefore oppose it now. Let the popular vote be given to the people. Let there be a *plébiscite* taken on this question; but do not put it on this Parliament, elected under the old form. If you do that, I will go with you; but, if you do not, I will not. Let us try the *plébiscite*—the Referendum—on this question. This is one of the very things it should be tried on. If you do that I am quite prepared to stand by it. How should we look with an Executive composed of the honourable member for Wellington City—

An Hon. MEMBER.—The honourable member for New Plymouth.

Mr. E. M. SMITH.—Well, if they were to elect me as Minister for Public Works I would make the railway from here to Auckland, and do useful things for the colony, and make all the roads and bridges in my district. But no; it is not last year's Bill, nor will it be next year's Bill; it will not be a Bill for five or ten years to come. We are at a very critical period of the history of the colony. We are,—there is no doubt about it. It takes all the skill, and all the courage, and all the ability of this House to keep certain members of this House from handing over the government of the country to the violent and total Prohibitionists.

Hon. MEMBERS.—Oh, no.

Mr. E. M. SMITH.—Oh, yes. Well, I say, if we were in worse hands—much as I love the country of my adoption and the home of my large family—we should be worse off, and no matter what concessions we give them they are not satisfied. Look at the Bills forced upon us now. Where is the country going to? There is the new liquor Bill. That is what we have got to watch. We have to guide the Government a little on that, I can assure you. There is plenty of time for me to say what I have got to say when that particular Bill comes up for discussion. These are all important questions I have to consider. Some of them give me the nightmare. I want, Sir, to prevent this country from being ruined. I want to protect the interests of the masses, and I do not want one particular section of the community to have things all their own way. I am here to see fair-play between all classes in the country. We are here to legislate in the interests of the masses, and not in the interests of the classes. I know a lot of these Bills—these policy measures we are now dealing with—are forced upon the Government; they are endeavoured to be forced upon the country by a minority. There is no doubt about that. When I look around this House, and when I know the results of the last general election, and know where the old politicians of the past have gone, I say it is time for me to pause. I am not jesting upon these

things. I am speaking in all seriousness. I can joke when a joke will go down, but I can talk as seriously as a Judge of the Supreme Court when the occasion requires it. It is time that we looked upon these side-issues in a serious manner. I know that if my honourable friend could only place this Bill upon the statute-book of New Zealand there is no doubt, however democratic he is, he would look out to be knighted for it by the Queen. Well, Mr. Speaker, I do not intend to weary the House any further by discussing this Bill at any greater length. I was always in favour of the female franchise, and I fought for it and stuck up for it like a brick; but the time has not arrived when we should have the ladies of the colony in the Executive Government of the country. They do not want it themselves. We must educate them in politics for the next ten or twelve years, and then we shall see what will follow. When the time has come, and if I am here as representative of the Garden of New Zealand, I shall take it into my consideration the same as any other of these great measures. At any rate, I am only going to deal now with the question before us. Now, I say that it would be a fatal mistake if this House collectively, or if this House individually, should jeopardize the position we are now in. It has taken the Liberals of this country twenty years to get to the position we are now in. It has taken all the arguments we could bring forward; and we had to go step by step in getting a freer franchise. We had to include every adult person in the colony over the age of twenty-one years in the franchise before we could attain this high and exalted position against the opposition of the Conservatives and the old fossils of the past; before we could get a good Government to put down the land-monopoly; before we could get a Government in power which would legislate for the interests of the masses, and not for the interests of the classes. And yet no sooner have we got this grand result than we are endeavouring now to destroy it, and undo the work of twenty years.

An Hon. MEMBER.—No.

Mr. E. M. SMITH.—I say to my honourable friend, when you are as old as I am you will find it to be the case. I ask members whether these various points bearing upon the policy of the country are not statesmanlike, rational, practical political questions, well thought out in the interests of New-Zealanders, and in the interests of the country. Sir, I am an Englishman by birth, and I love my country and my nationality, but I love the country of my adoption better—that is, New Zealand—and of all the spots in New Zealand the one I love best is the Garden of New Zealand, and I know if I were asked about my vote, and had to say I gave a silent vote upon this important question when I went back to my constituents, they would say more to my being silent than they would if they knew I had taken such a broad, such a patriotic, and such an intelligent view upon the question. There is no doubt about it. Yes, Mr. Speaker, there is work for us all to do—noble work for us all to do:

Mr. E. M. Smith

Arrayed beneath the stainless light,
Shoulder to shoulder, in the great cause of
common right,
There's noble work for all to do.
Then, awake! ye dull, lethargic crew,
Dash down Oppression's iron will,
And claim, in voice as thunder loud,
A fair equality for all!
And vote with me to smash and crash
This ill-timed Elective Executive Bill.

Mr. R. McKENZIE.—I had no intention of making a speech on this Bill at all, and, after the very able address that we have just listened to, I am sure there is no need to detain the House long. However, like the honourable member who has just sat down, I do not care about giving a silent vote. This Bill is a very old friend of mine. I have opposed it on at least thirty public platforms in this colony, and I ran the last election in my constituency against a gentleman who had sat in this House for twenty-five years, and who was the father of this very Bill. It is for this reason that I do not care to give a silent vote to-night. The honourable gentleman who introduced the Bill told the House that the principle contained in it would have to be accepted as the policy of the country within three years. If he thinks that, I venture to say he will find that he is very much mistaken indeed. Of the thirty public platforms on which I attacked this very Bill, I think I got majorities at twenty. That does not indicate that it is going to be the policy of the country in three years' time. With respect to Mr. Eugene O'Connor, the gentleman who first brought this measure before the House, I may say that he used all the arguments that could be brought forward in support of it, and that he waxed really eloquent in dealing with it, for, if he had a hobby at all, this Bill undoubtedly was his hobby; he always treated this subject with great ability—with much more ability than was indicated by anything I heard in its favour to-night. He made a special trip to the Swiss Republic for the purpose of finding out how this system worked there, and in order to learn all he could about it. I was at the banquet that was given to him on his return, and he told us then all that he had gathered about it. But my ideas and his do not coincide on this particular question; and even at that time I said that we should be making a mistake if we were ever prevailed upon to imitate the model Swiss Republic in the manner proposed in this Bill. I have no hesitation in saying that it is not a question within the range of practical politics at the present time in this colony, nor is it likely to be for many years to come, if it is ever likely to be. Does the honourable gentleman mean to tell us we are likely to have elective Ministers in a British colony and an English-speaking community? If any change is required, can we not find models to imitate in the communities to which we are allied by race? I do not think that any English-speaking community is ever likely to go to the Swiss Republic to learn the art of government. I ask, if a change is ever found to be necessary, are there not enough models amongst the annals and traditions of our own

people by which to effect that change? Therefore, I repeat, we are not at all likely to copy the forms observed by the Swiss Republic. I am not going to delay the House by dwelling upon this abstract question.

Mr. SAUNDERS.—Sir, nothing could show the unassailable position that this Bill occupies in this House to-night more conclusively than the fact that we find it is to be treated with ridicule; that no argument is to be offered; that it is treated as if we were in a playhouse or theatre, and not in an assembly of the Legislature. Now, Sir, if I wished to follow the style of the speakers who have opposed this Bill I should be quite unable to do so. To me it seems to be one of the most serious, most solemn, and important questions that could possibly be brought before this House. Sir, it has taken us fifty years to pass in this country payment of members, ballot election, equal electoral districts, triennial Parliaments, manhood and womanhood suffrage. These measures have been attained by fifty earnest years of political work; and what do they mean, Sir? What are they? They accomplish nothing in themselves. What we passed them for was in order to attain to a system of good government. They were so many tools that would enable us to arrive at that good government; and now we have to pass on to the more important reforms before us for which those tools were designed. It is our business, as intelligent men, to make use of what we have already done, and we now propose to rear the structures of good and safe government, which we need so much at the present time. The wise or the unwise, the pure or the impure, the unselfish or the selfish government of this colony will never be a subject for buffoonery by any honest patriot; and the attitude that the Government takes on this matter is one that I think they will regret. Woman suffrage was ridiculed in this House not long ago; it is now the law of the land. This Bill may be ridiculed here to-night, but it will not be long before something like it is the law of the land. Sir, we have on these benches gentlemen who, like most other persons, admire the ladder which carried them to a loftier position; but I admire the ladder that this House is going to use to put those men at the top who may be the most fit to govern this country, and who may be the most worthy members of this Parliament. I do not wish this Bill to be

treated—and I do not intend to treat it—in any way as a party measure. I do not intend to treat it in any way as an attack on the present Government. I wish the Government had taken the Bill as it ought to be taken, and had argued on the subject wisely, and shown us what would be the disadvantage of adopting it.

Mr. REEVES.—We may do so yet.

Mr. SAUNDERS.—If you do you will find you would have done much better to have treated it as it ought to be treated, with the respect it deserves, and not to have put up the honourable member who followed the mover of the Bill.

Mr. REEVES.—We put up no one.

Mr. E. M. SMITH.—Sir, I rise to make a personal explanation. I can assure you, Sir, and the honourable gentleman that neither the Government nor the Government Whips ever spoke to me. I rose to speak and give my views in the exercise of the privileges I have, unauthorised or unrequested by any one.

Mr. SAUNDERS.—The object this Bill proposes is that, instead of the haphazard work under which Governments now get into office, very much by their own exertions, very much by accident, and not at all by the deliberate choice of this House, we should adopt such a course of legislation as shall enable the House, when first elected, deliberately to meet and to elect, by votes of the people's representatives, the Ministers they think most trustworthy, to carry on the business of the country. First of all, I should like to point out what is the difference between the motives and the objects which would naturally actuate a House under these circumstances, and the motives and the objects that would actuate a Premier called upon accidentally or designedly or in any way by a Governor and then left to nominate his own associates. What would be his first care? It would be to see that there was not a Minister in his Government who was a more able man than himself, or who was likely to supplant him in the Cabinet. Consequently, we see the result of the present system has constantly been, and will constantly be, that we have a one-man Government in New Zealand. We have an autocrat, and the result is that we have what we ought not to have. We have this House dominated by one Minister, and not this House directing, as it ought to do, the Government of the country as to the measures they should adopt, and as to the principles that ought to actuate their conduct. If we had the election of the Ministers by this House, it would clearly be our interest to put seven of the best men we could find on those benches—the men most adapted to the work required from them. Then, Sir, knowing that if ever we are to have good government we must adopt something better than the present party system, where can we look for a model? We have been told that we should go to our own countrymen and to our own country. Well, Sir, our own country has been a very unfortunate one in many respects. Our ancestors in England came to their work under circumstances very unfavourable as compared with those which now stand before us. They had to deal with the tyranny of the Tudors, the Stuarts, the Hanoverians, and lastly, and perhaps principally, with the bigotry, the obstinacy, and the lunacy of George III., and in order to get something to counteract these enormous evils they have bit by bit endeavoured to get in the system of party government under which the Crown is now happily placed in subjection to the Parliament. There cannot be a doubt that in doing this they have attained, step by step and with enormous difficulty, a very great point, and they have accomplished something very valuable, and have got a really good government

compared with the tyranny which that government has displaced. But we have no such difficulties to deal with. We are not obliged to have any Governor at all unless we like. We are not obliged to have any king at all. We are a democratic people, and disposed to obtain a pure democratic government, in which the people's voice shall at all times be heard. Now, I think I have said enough to show that it is vastly better that this House shall deliberately go to work to choose seven of the best men we can find when we first meet rather than it should be left to the choice of one man, whose principal object will continually be to take care that he chooses such men as he can certainly control, and in whom he will find no formidable rival. This has been the case in regard to nearly all our New Zealand Governments. But let me remind the House of this: that our first Government was placed almost exactly in the position in which this Bill would place any Government in the future. The first Government came into office into new work, and with servants even more new to the work than themselves, so that they were not ruled by their servants or constantly dependent upon them. This first Government was composed entirely of university men—of men with as much experience as possible, and men of great ability and some useful education. Now, they went to work, each man in his own department. They had a great deal of work to do which does not devolve upon the Government now. The Stafford Government had to introduce laws to govern this country; they had a clear field before them; they had an enormous amount of work to do in order to provide the legislation necessary in an entirely new country. They had to deal fairly and justly with the Provincial Governments of this country, and they did so; and the result was that we did not have in that Government at that time a one-man Government. And I may say that the circumstances under which this Government was got together were very similar indeed to those proposed under this Bill. But then, Sir, when the same Premier came to be Premier some ten years later than that, when in 1865 he became Premier, with colleagues selected by himself, and with servants wiser and more experienced than their masters, you would find it a difficulty to know—I do not believe many persons in this House would be able to tell you—who his Ministers were. They were men hardly known; men who would never dispute any position which so experienced a Premier as Mr. Stafford took up; and the last Government of Mr. Stafford was practically a one-man Government, such as most of our New Zealand Governments have been. With regard to Mr. Fox, he never held office long together, but if he had held office for ever so long he would never have been an autocrat. He might, and did, allow other members of his Governments to become autocrats, but he would never have been one himself. His disposition, although he was a strong, caustic debater, was so incessantly amiable and so unselfish, he was so ready at all times to give way to his colleagues, that Mr. Fox would never have been an auto-

Mr. Saunders

crat. But we saw how soon one of his colleagues might become an autocrat. When he allowed a Vogel to become one of his Ministers the reins soon dropped from his own hands, and he went out of office quietly rather than dispute his position in the Ministry. All these things are not as they should be. We know very well, when we come to the later Ministries, what we have always heard of the Atkinson Government. It was always called a one-man Government; nobody asks who were his colleagues. Nobody asks who were Vogel's colleagues; it was simply known as the Vogel Government, as the Atkinson Government was emphatically an Atkinson autocracy. And therefore I say the present system of government leads in the most unquestionable degree to a constant tendency to a one-man Government. And I may say that under the Swiss system that constant danger is so well recognised as a great danger to be avoided in any country which wants to maintain its own liberties that one of their regulations is this: that no man shall hold the position of President or Vice-President of the Executive Council for more than one year at a time. No man can hold the position of President for two successive years. Then, Sir, we have been told by the honourable gentleman who introduced this Bill that he has not adopted the Swiss system to anything like its full extent. All that he asks for now is that we should adopt the first step,—that of an elective Executive. Now, I think, if honourable members would study this question, and learn a little of the history of Switzerland, they would see what the Swiss system really is, and they would agree with me that the Bill does not go anything like far enough; and, if we are to alter our present Government, we should take the highest model in the world for the formation of a Government to succeed it. I am glad this Bill, if passed, is to go to the Committee upon constitutional reform, and, if it comes to that Committee, I shall certainly advocate that a great many changes shall be introduced which are not in it at the present time. With regard to the position that Ministers as elected would be placed in, we have been told they would be more secure. That is quite correct. They would be more secure and more independent; but at the same time they would be the servants, not the tyrants, of this House. They would not be obliged to withdraw their measures when they found they were not going to pass; they would not have to send their Whips round to ask whether a thing would be carried before they dared to introduce it. They would have to consider what was best for the country, what they knew the country to want, and, having decided on that, they could then honestly and unreservedly introduce a Bill, and support it by their presence in either Chamber. Having done that, they have done their duty. If the House chooses to say, "We do not want the Bill in that shape, we want it in another shape," they are the servants of the House; they take the Bill back again, and they adapt it to the views of the House. That, Sir, would be giving to the people of the country the real

and not the fictitious power to govern themselves, and it is not putting up an autocrat calling itself a free Government or a Liberal Government. What we want is to give power to the people—to give the government of the people to the people; and anything that approaches that should be supported by any Government calling itself Liberal. Any Government who oppose that are not a Liberal Government, call themselves what they will. There may be differences of opinion as to the best course to be pursued, and as to how much of this we should adopt at the present time, but it would be an immense advantage to be able to adopt a system of government which is no mere experiment, but which has worked with such admirable effect for forty-six years, under difficulties far greater than any which we have to contend with. Having shown the difficulties under which the English Government arrived at their present system of party government, I may now say a word about the Government of America. You will find that there was a code of laws hastily adopted by a victorious handful of patriots. They were very good. Their intentions were still better, and there is no doubt that, carried out as they were by those true and well-tried patriots, they resulted in excellent work being done. But they have now to contend with difficulties that were not seen in those days. They have now to contend with the tricks of their election canvassers, and, worse than all, to contend with the tricks of the rings and monopolists. They have to contend with the wretched system of Protection, by which a few selfish men contrive to grow rich at the expense of the masses; and under all these things they have shown the necessity for improvement in their laws and Constitution, and very great necessity for improvement in their system of executive government. Then, we have this great fact: that both America and England have sent their representatives to Switzerland to watch the practical working of that Government, and to report as to the result, and their report has been, without exception, of the highest character, commending the very excellent way in which it has worked in that country. Now, what is that country? A poor, small, mountainous country, populated to its utmost capacity, but intensely free and independent; educated, and respected with all its poverty, and firmly forbidding the most powerful armies to put a foot on its poor and small domain. We have been told to-night that it is a country in which the Legislature has itself to deal with three different nationalities, speaking three different languages. It is a country in which Catholics and Protestants are almost equally divided, and had been at war for centuries; and no country has ever, perhaps, exhibited more desperate and bitter sectarian quarrels than had been exhibited in Switzerland prior to the adoption of her present Constitution in 1848. In her whole system of government for the last forty-six years such quarrels have not been heard of. We have been told that the management of their army,

the education of their children, the extreme economy of their finance, the high character of their administration of justice, the economy, facility, and advantages of their railways, the great efforts that are made to facilitate commerce and free trade throughout the country, the wonderful progress of their manufactures, and the steady manner in which they maintain their local self-government, are all objects for admiration such as very few countries have been able to attain to the same perfection. The army of Switzerland is renowned all over the world; it is spoken of with admiration by all judges of military system. Their education is almost free from the sectarian antagonism which we find so difficult to keep out of our education. Catholics and Protestants sit down together, and they agree together, in a vast number of instances, to carry on their schools, generally with no bitterness or prejudices such as are the bane of education in most other countries. Well, Sir, with all these advantages attained, I say, is not such a Government worth inquiring about? Is the evident self-interest of a few individuals to bar us from such inquiry? We must do something to get better government than we have here now; and surely this is the country for us to go to, where we find these results attained; and why is a Legislature to get its back up against a report or a Bill of this kind? Surely there are fairer and better means of acting than are adopted to-night: and I should like to hear what reasons there are why we should not adopt a proposal which has asked us to take the best model we can find in the world for government in this country, and to adopt, not an experiment, but something that has proved to be thoroughly efficient and thoroughly useful. Now, Sir, I have stated what has been the result of our present system of government in the past history of New Zealand. We have now come to a time when this fault of government is, perhaps, more marked than it ever was before; and I say that it is most advisable, under these circumstances, that we should, before we are called upon to meet again after another general election, be prepared to elect the Government under a system which would insure that the voice of this House is represented on the Government. Thus we should have a system under which this standing tendency to autocracy—this propensity which exists in human nature to obtain and keep as much power in its own hands as it can possibly grasp—would be effectively checked. One of the greatest proofs of the despotism of individuals, and the despotism of bodies of this kind, was given to this colony when you, Sir, and I were defeated on the question of Provincial Councils, when our Provincial Councils were abolished. That was the time when the liberties of this country were destroyed. That was the time when we were asked to spend money—not what was felt to be our own money, but money that was collected by the provinces and brought up to this Empire City, and spent rashly and wastefully, with other motives than that of improving the

country. That being the case, I say we want something that will lead us to a better system of local self-government. Take the Government of Switzerland. Although it is surrounded by rich and powerful military countries, which could at any time give it an enormous deal of trouble,—with tyrants abhorring its love of freedom, education, and independence,—yet it manages all its own affairs, and effectually keeps neighbouring tyrants at bay. It keeps a complete central Government, and at the same time it gives the most absolute liberty to each local Government; and in no country in the world is there such liberty of choice as to their local Government as there is in Switzerland. I say it is one of the recommendations of the Swiss system of government that, whilst it provides a far better system of central government than we now have here, at the same time it gives an opportunity of arranging for a system of local government such as we have never known in this country;—and this country will never be prosperous until we go back to the provinces and allow them to take care of their own resources, instead of sending them to this House to be sunk in projects as wild and wasteful as they are ambitious and pretentious.

Mr. REEVES.—Sir, I was not anxious to inflict my views on the House to-night: not because I did not treat this Bill as a serious matter—I think it is a very serious matter indeed, or will become so if there is the slightest chance of its being passed into law—but because a Minister, who has to address this House so often in defence of Government measures, as a rule rather prefers to keep silent on a private member's Bill. If we make long speeches and set speeches on private members' Bills we feel that we are inflicting ourselves on the House. It was for that reason, and no other, that Ministers have not rushed into this discussion to-night. Moreover, the honourable gentleman should remember that, as a rule, the incentive to reply depends on the arguments that have been brought to bear in the debate. I am bound to say the member for Selwyn has given us a very interesting speech indeed: still, until he rose, I must, with all due respect to the honourable gentleman who moved this motion, doubt whether there was much to reply to. Even now I doubt whether a very strong case had been made out for the elective Executive system. The honourable gentleman who moved this measure devoted the earlier part of his speech to a history of the exertions of himself and others for this measure. He gave us the history of all these Committees and caucuses, and resolutions of this House, in a manner which, I have no doubt, was accurate. He then read a variety of extracts from other thinkers and writers which, I dare say, were interesting, but which I was unable to hear, owing to the position from which he addressed this House; and finally he brought forward certain statements and arguments of his own, all of them most earnestly and sincerely delivered, but which did not appear to me to have anything novel or convincing about them. I have

heard them all before, and they did not appear to be of a character likely to carry conviction with them. However, the honourable member for Selwyn has just delivered a very deliberate, temperate, and argumentative speech, and, if I cannot be so argumentative, I shall endeavour to state the views I hold as temperately as he did his. This is an academic question, which may best be discussed in an academic manner. I do not think it is necessary to drag up the past of any party, or any Government, or any particular member of a Government. I think such things would be better kept out of it, and that we should discuss the matter purely as a constitutional question, important as it undoubtedly is. However, the honourable member for Selwyn referred to the Government, and, in doing so, he said it was natural that men would like to uphold the system by which they climbed into power. Now, Sir, I declare that I am supporting the existing system not because it was the ladder by which I climbed into office. I supported strongly, very strongly indeed, the system of party government when I first stood for Christchurch in 1887 and was elected by a large majority. I supported it again in 1890 just as strongly, when I never dreamed that for years to come either my party or myself would see office. The honourable member for Wellington City (Sir R. Stout) knows that: because in the course of a confidential conversation we had during the general election I told him I did not think our party would carry the elections. Last year I came out again as a strong upholder of party government. I have on those three occasions been returned with as good a majority as any man might reasonably hope to get. I quote that simply as an example of the fact that in perhaps the most democratic city in New Zealand—Christchurch—a man may be returned to this House who is a strong upholder of the present party system. The honourable member for Selwyn upholds the elective system on the ground that it will bring Ministers more closely in touch with the people, and will give the people more power

over Ministers. Now, that is exactly what it will not do if we adopt the Swiss system,—which is not the grotesque, hybrid system that this Bill provides,—for you will distinctly take away from the representatives of the people, and therefore from the people themselves, the power they have to remove any Government from office which misconducts itself. That is a very great and important constitutional right. Although I do not want personally to be removed from the position which I occupy, I should be very sorry to see the representatives of the people give up that great and necessary public right. You should have the right to remove any Ministry that misconducts itself, and loses the confidence of the majority of this House; and if you give that power up you cannot, I am sure, know what results may follow. We are told that the Swiss system gives the people greater power; yet the honourable gentleman who introduced the Bill has stated that it would certainly make the Ministers more independent; but

Mr. Saunders

how can you make Ministers more independent, and yet give the people greater power over them? I should like to deal with a few of the arguments of the honourable gentleman who introduced the Bill. I shall not go into ancient history, or follow him in the parallel which he drew between the Witenagemote and the proposal here introduced. That Assembly, I take leave to point out, was not an Assembly in which all the people met together and legislated. It was an Assembly of the King and his Earldormen, and one in which the people had no room whatever. The King and his Earls legislated for the people, but the people had no voice in it. But let us come to Switzerland. The argument of the honourable member for Selwyn amounted to this: that the Swiss are a nation in every respect very superior to us—higher educated and better governed. The honourable gentleman stated that they were such a good example that we should endeavour to follow them, and that we ought to adopt their peculiar system of electing the Executive. He considered that the superior position of the Swiss was due to the elective-Executive system. But, first of all, I deny that the Swiss, fine people as they are, are a better people, or that their country is a better country, than New Zealand. Are the Swiss a more moral people than we are? I say they are not. The proportion of illegitimate births there is above what it is here. Are they a more sober people than we are? I say they are not. They are commonly called a nation of innkeepers. For the benefit of the honourable member for Christchurch City (Mr. G. J. Smith), I may mention that they have made the manufacture of spirits a Government monopoly, and they get a very large revenue from that. Are they a better-educated people than we are? No, they are not. Then, have they set us any example in legislative reform in recent years? That is exactly where the elective Executive system has failed. No Parliament that has sat in Switzerland during the last forty years can show anything like such a brilliant record as the Parliament of New Zealand during the last four years. If we want an example of success in legislative reform, by no means copy the Swiss system. It has no doubt its strong points, but legislative reform is not among them. What, then, is the source of the comparative well-being of the Swiss population? To ascertain this we have to go back to ancient history. The Swiss were always a nation occupying the position, so to speak, of a citadel surrounded by the many fortresses of Europe; and in the case of people inhabiting mountainous country you will find them developed into a very fine physical and industrious race. In many a tough battle with the feudal armies of their neighbours they won their freedom. Having that, they learned to manage their affairs, and developed their excellent system of local government. And it is because the Swiss are a very intelligent people that they long ago developed that fine system of education which has put them at the head of the other nations of Europe. I believe

their system of education and their system of local government have been the sources of the prosperity and well-being of Switzerland, and not the elective-Executive system. The elective-Government system in Switzerland is a thing of yesterday; it is only a matter of the last forty years. But let us see how that system works in Switzerland. It is true, I believe, that the meetings of the Federal Assembly are conducted in a very businesslike way, and in some respects, possibly, we may find things that we can imitate; but in some respects I do not think that is the case. In the Swiss Assembly every man has to go dressed in a black coat: that might be a very excellent thing, but I do not think we need imitate that. They have no *Hansard* in Switzerland, and I do not know that we should like to copy that. They meet at eight o'clock in the morning, and, supposing we should copy that, I am afraid I should have to retire from public life. Then, the Swiss Federal Assembly is not distinguished, under the present system, for leading the way in progressive legislation, but quite the reverse. During the last forty years they have not done anything much in the direction of industrial legislation. The honourable gentleman referred to the fact that we were now face to face with great social questions, and that we ought to meet them; but I say, if we take into consideration the question of the labour legislation, and the position we have taken in this colony in regard to that, and compare it with that of Switzerland, we shall find that the position of the labour laws of that country is very backward indeed. So far as the result of the Swiss system of elective Government is concerned, I think the best they claim is that their departmental work has been very well done. That is the one good result of their system. The honourable member for Selwyn also stated that the Swiss stood pre-eminent for economy in their finances; but for the last four years for which I could get their Budget figures they brought down deficits, and I hope we shall not copy them in that respect.

Sir R. STOUT.—So will you if you cease to borrow. They do not borrow.

Mr. REEVES.—Don't they! They have a national debt, and if the honourable gentleman will look at the statistics he will see that they do borrow, most certainly. How is it that the Swiss get ahead of their Federal Central Assembly? It is on account of their excellent system of local self-government; and the position of the Swiss Confederation shows what New Zealand ought to have been, and what New Zealand might have become but for the abolition of the provinces. If we are to imitate Switzerland, let us do so in that respect, and let us reform our system of local self-government and go back to a modified system of Provincialism. If we do that, I think we shall be able to take many a good hint from Switzerland in the conduct of a local-government system. But I say the Swiss are not ahead of us; that their good position springs not from the fact of the elective system, but from their excellent primary

system of education, from their historical traditions of freedom, and from their fine system of local self-government. With regard to their Executive system, one political party has almost always been in power, and that is why they have managed to have some sort of continuity, and why they have managed to elect an Executive which has contrived to work pretty well together. This Executive does not represent all shades of public opinion, as my honourable friend the member for Waimate promises his will do. One party, in one shape or another, has held the power during nearly the whole of the time this elective system has been in force, and that is why they have managed to get along. The honourable member for Waimate drew a picture of a most impressive character as to the brilliant changes that would result if Governments were once able to feel that they need not fear votes of no confidence: then there was to be no more corruption, lobbying, canvassing, or whipping. He stated that we should have men who would legislate for the good of the State simply. It would be a case of "Then none were for the party, and all were for the State," as Macaulay so eloquently writes in lines so much quoted by the opponents of party government: yet these lines were written by one of the staunchest supporters of party government who ever sat in Parliament. I refer to Lord Macaulay. He wrote those verses comparatively early in his life, and he remained for long after a staunch party man. But let us pass from Switzerland: let us look to a country the inhabitants of which speak our own language, are of the same blood, and of the same race—where they have a fixed Executive. Let us go to America. Under the Swiss system the House is elected, and then the House chooses the Executive. Under the American system the President is chosen by the direct vote of the people, and the American President is simply Governor and Premier rolled into one. He chooses his Executive, and he holds office for four years. What is the result? Every evil of our party system, exaggerated and extended. I do not think the honourable gentleman wants to have here anything like the state of things we see in America. Although, perhaps, not to the same extent, that would be the result in this country of having a fixed Government, on something like the American system, because the Swiss system clearly resembles the American system, inasmuch as it is simply a way of getting a fixed Executive for three years. The Swiss system is the simpler one. Instead of having the President elected by the vote of the people and choosing his Executive, as in America, you have the House of Parliament chosen by the people and the Executive elected by the Parliament. The difference is not great. In both cases you get a fixed Executive. What are the results in America? The results are simply to consolidate each party in the State: and you always will have parties in the State in any Anglo-Saxon country; you will always have a party of resistance and a party of progress,—as long as you have the capitalistic system, and have wealth

as it is, and the ownership of property, you must have two parties in the State. What would be the result of adopting this elective system here? Simply we should have party organization, and, instead of its being found in Parliament, it would be outside Parliament and in the country. You will have the machine, the ring, the caucus, and the "boss," instead of the Government party and the Government Whip; and I think our present system, with an Executive Government and a Government Whip and party caucuses in the House, is preferable to the domination of the "boss," the "machine," and the caucus outside. What is the meaning of the desire of certain honourable gentlemen to be allowed to come here and, as they express it, vote as they please? Does it mean as they individually please? In most cases it means nothing of the kind. It means, simply as a certain block vote pleases—as certain rings and political associations and certain influences outside decide. I would sooner have our party domination than see members dictated to by telegrams from certain associations, or get their order from block votes from outside. I very much prefer the party vote as it is at present worked to that. I prefer the party whip and organization inside to having members returned here who would be the slaves of block votes and the puppets of certain organizations. This is no fancy picture that I am drawing. I say you cannot abolish party, and then it is a choice between organization in Parliament and closer organization outside. Because, if we are to have a fixed Executive, think what an immense stake and a valuable prize there will be for the party organization to strive to secure at each general election. It means that at one blow it will get the rule of the colony for three years. It would return a majority to this House, elect an Executive, and thus rule New Zealand for three years without the possibility of removal. It would mean that there would be block votes, rings, "bosses," and caucuses outside; there would be electioneering and canvassing; and they would also put down their money. Look at America, and you will see that they have all that; and you would have it in New Zealand. I would sooner have our present system of party organization as it is carried out in England and in New Zealand, and not introduce into this country the "machine" and the corruption of America, from which we are now, fortunately, free. Now let us come to the working of the system in the House, and during the few minutes still remaining I will try to show how it is to work. First of all, there is a suggestion that the Government can be elected from both sides of the House. That is simply a fraudulent suggestion. It simply means a fraud upon the innocence of the people outside who do not know how work here is done. To argue that it is possible for the Executive to be elected from both sides of the House is simply a fraud upon the people of New Zealand. We must know perfectly well that it is absolutely

Mr. Reeves

impossible that any Executive can work harmoniously if it consists of men whose principles are antagonistic. For instance, fancy the honourable member for Wellington City (Mr. Duthie) and myself being in the same Executive, administering the Labour Department, and dealing with labour legislation; and fancy the honourable member for Hawke's Bay and the Minister of Lands acting together in the administration of the land-laws, and legislating for land reform. I need not multiply instances; but fancy the Premier and the honourable member for Wellington City (Sir R. Stout) being in the same Government, and that Government having to bring forward a Bill dealing with the liquor question. The thing is preposterous. You must have an Executive the members of which are fairly well in touch with one another on the questions of the day. Now for this ridiculous proposal—that of the honourable member for Waimate. The honourable gentleman does not adopt the fixed Executive system of Switzerland, which, with all its faults, has some logic about it. He actually proposes that, instead of removing the Executive by open voting, you may remove it by secret votes which will take away individual Ministers one by one, and, when you have taken away four Ministers, all must resign. Let us have the removal of the Executive under our present system; and, for Heaven's sake, do not let us have the work done silently, secretly, and surreptitiously. Fancy the position of a Minister sitting here who is liable to be removed silently, secretly, and surreptitiously by a ballot if he displeases members of this House! A Minister has every day to refuse requests of supporters on his own side. Why is he able to do that? Because his colleagues stand by him and prevent his being jumped upon and bullied for not granting unreasonable demands. There is no use talking about independence in such a position as is indicated in this Bill. I would not occupy that position for a day. I say that a Minister would be a slave of the House, and independence would be an empty name. Our present system is far preferable to the unmanly and un-English proposal under which a Minister may be removed by secret intrigue and the ballot. The proposal is one of the worst which, I think, have ever been introduced in a Bill in this House. I have a great deal more to say on this subject, but my time is up, and all that I can claim is that I have stuck to the question before the House. I have not attacked individuals, and I have discussed the question on its merits, and have tried to treat—as the honourable member for Solwyn asked us to do—a serious Bill in a serious manner.

Mr. BUTTON.—I merely wish to say that I approve of the principle of this Bill, and would be found voting for it if I had not given a friendly "pair."

Sir R. STOUT.—The honourable member, the Minister of Education, has said that he has spoken in a serious manner of a serious Bill, but the honourable gentleman has touched very

little upon the Bill before the House. He talked much about Switzerland and the United States; but, so far as the Bill is concerned, he has not touched it, and from the way in which he has referred to it I am afraid he has not read it. He complained that no power is given to the House to remove the Ministry as a whole. If he would refer to clause 9 he would see that "At any time during the sitting of Parliament a ballot upon the proposal that the whole Executive or any member or members thereof be removed from office may be demanded by requisition to the Speaker of the House of Representatives signed by not less than twenty members."

Mr. REEVES.—I referred to the Swiss Executive.

Sir R. STOUT.—The honourable gentleman argued that there was no provision for removing the Executive as a whole. That was his argument, and I submit that before he argued in that way he ought to have read the Bill. The Bill provides for the removal of the Executive as a whole. Now I want to say one or two words upon the Bill. I recognise that so long as party government exists you must have members coming to this House pledged to one side or the other. I may remark that some twenty-seven or twenty-eight years ago I wrote indicating that I was afraid that our party system would not work altogether satisfactorily, and suggesting some alterations. Let me point out this: that the best Governments we have had in England have not always been selected on party lines. Do honourable members know that party government in its more complete form has only been developed, so far as England is concerned, during the last two hundred years? Before William's reign there was no such thing as Cabinet Government such as we have now. Members were found in the same Cabinet holding diverse opinions. England did a great deal of noble work in those days. She fought well, and she administered her affairs ably. What has this recent development of party become? The honourable gentleman says we are to have the caucus and the "boss" system here. We have it here. What was the test at the last election? The test was not whether they were to support the Liberal party, but the test was put whether they would support the Government. That was the question put, and written pledges were demanded, and I understand that some written pledges were given to that effect. So far as that is concerned, this system, or the "boss" system, exists almost as it does in the United States. What is the distinction between us and the United States so far as the Executive is concerned? What has been done there is that the Executive has been entirely divorced from the Legislature; it does not sit in the Legislature. There they have kept the three different parts of Government apart. The Judiciary is apart, the Legislature is apart, and the Executive is apart. And if that system has not worked well—and I admit it has not worked well—it is not because of their keeping these three things apart. I say in the United States

the greatest corruption has been not in the Executive, but in the Legislature. The whole complaint has been against the Legislature. No complaint has ever been made, for example, against the Federal Executive. They have been able men who have done their work nobly.

Mr. REEVES.—How about “the spoils to the victors”?

Sir R. STOUT.—I am coming to that, and I am glad the honourable gentleman has mentioned it. I am going to deal with that in a minute or two. So far as “the spoils to the victors” is concerned, that was introduced during Jackson's Presidency; but the true Liberals in the United States now demand that there shall not be “the spoils to the victors,” and they say that the Civil Service should be independent if there is to be good government; and yet the honourable gentleman's Government has inaugurated “the spoils to the victors” here.

Mr. REEVES.—That is untrue.

Mr. SPEAKER.—The honourable gentleman must not use such an expression.

Mr. REEVES.—I apologize, but the honourable gentleman's statement is incorrect.

Sir R. STOUT.—I can give an example, if the honourable gentleman wants it—I can point to the Railway Commissioners' case. Is not that an instance of “the spoils to the victors”? It is entirely a case of “the spoils to the victors.” I defy the honourable member to point to a single case in which the Executive of the United States has afforded a worse instance of “the spoils to the victors.” I am not going, however, to deal with the railway matter at present. I have quite enough to do to deal with this Bill. What I want to point out is that, so far as any argument from Switzerland or America is concerned, you cannot certainly say a word against this Bill. I want the House to look at this question. What is the whole object of government? The object, I apprehend, so far as the Judiciary is concerned, is to get able, upright, and impartial

10.0. Judges. We all ought to aim at getting the judicial department put on that footing. Well, then, in our Legislature, what ought we to have? Ought not we to have our Legislature, each member of it, free to give his vote on every measure which comes up according to his conscience, according to his pledges? Surely that ought to be the aim, that ought to be the object; that ought to be the ideal Legislature. Can we call a Legislature a free Legislature when the members are not allowed to vote according to their consciences or according to their speeches? Is that a free Legislature? And do we hope to get any beneficial laws if the Legislature is not free? As it is, what is the present system drifting to? It is drifting in such a way that the report of the Constitutional Reform Committee says this: “That the Committee consider party government as it exists in New Zealand is not adapted to obtain the best results of government; and that there should be a change in the form of government.” That is, I believe, the unanimous opinion of the Constitutional

Sir R. Stout

Reform Committee. I was not present at the Committee when that resolution was adopted; I was at the sub-committee at which it was agreed to; but it was referred to the general Committee, so that I do not know how the voting was, but I understand it was unanimous. Now, if that be so, what does this point to? Why, it points to the fact that the members of that Committee were, I believe, echoing the opinions of two-thirds of the members of this House, that the present system of party government could not long exist if we were to have a free Legislature in New Zealand. That is so far as legislation is concerned. The next point is, What ought our Executive Ministry to be? And here the honourable member was entirely at sea as to what a Cabinet Government is. If he would refer to—I do not know a better book to refer to than—Gladstone's essays on “Kin beyond the Sea” he would see there that a Cabinet is only called together to deal with what may be termed large questions of policy. Each Minister in his own department is supreme. That being so, the examples he gave were entirely beside the question; they were not in point. For example, if he had to deal with the land-laws, the Minister of Lands, even under our present system, has to deal with his own department, and not to refer the details of the department to his colleagues. That being so, that is what is laid down by Mr. Gladstone in that essay, “Kin beyond the Sea,” to which I have referred. I have not seen it for a year or two, but I remember it perfectly. Therefore this objection, as to how a Minister is to deal with a question like that if he had as a colleague one of different views on the land question, is entirely outside the mark.

Mr. REEVES.—He has to get the money. Supposing he had a Tory Treasurer?

Sir R. STOUT.—He has to get the money now, and, to get money, he has to ask the Legislature. It is not given by his colleague. What else would he need the money for?

An Hon. MEMBER.—For roading land.

Sir R. STOUT.—Roading land! He ought to have nothing to do with that. That shows the very weakness of the Executive system. All the works ought to be under the Minister for Public Works, and the Minister of Lands should have nothing to do with them, and under a proper system of government we ought not to hear the words “road” and “bridge” in this Parliament. They ought to be referred to local governing bodies, properly endowed, according to the pledge that was given at the time of abolition. Now, what other question is there? The Minister, in dealing with other questions, referred to the liquor question. Now, we have the Governor's Speech; and what does the Governor's Speech say on the liquor question? Every one is to have his own opinion. It is to be a case of go-as-you-please. There is to be no party on the liquor question; but each one is to vote as he pleases. Why should it not be the same about the Land for Settlements Bill? Why should it not be the same if it were a labour Bill or any other

Bill introduced? Why is this liquor question selected as the one on which each member may vote as he likes, and not every question that comes before the Legislature? Is it because it is more important? Is it because it is the most important question? Is that the reason why each is to vote as he pleases? Do the Ministry say that it transcends all other questions? If so, why do they not use their great power to carry the measure through Parliament? Why do they allow each member to vote as he pleases? The honourable member cannot answer that argument.

Mr. REEVES.—Can't I?

Sir R. STOUT.—The honourable member asks, "Can't I?" Well, he will have to give a better answer than he did in his speech to-night. What is their objection to this? I say that it is only this that will give us a free Legislature, and that that is a thing most necessary. It has been said that in those countries, like Switzerland, where you have this system there are no great reforms. I tell the honourable member that there are very great reforms made in Switzerland. We are not nearly up to them. Our education system is not half as complete as Switzerland's. There the system is complete, especially in the secondary and higher education, which we are doing nothing to help, and have done nothing to help for several years past. What is it Switzerland recognises? Switzerland recognises that it can only maintain its position—poor country, comparatively speaking, as it is—by having its people educated to the highest extent, and so it has polytechnic institutions, it has colleges, and everything is done to encourage higher education among the people. And what are we doing? We are fifty years behind Switzerland in education. Then, the honourable gentleman says there is no labour legislation there. They have labour legislation, Sir, and the platform of the Liberal party in Switzerland puts labour legislation in the front rank. Then, the honourable gentleman says that they have party dominance, and that party dominance would secure that only members of the party would be elected members of the Executive. It is not so in Switzerland. They have had two, at least, taken from the Conservative party and put into the Executive, though the Liberals have been for years in power. In every case where they have found most able administrators they have kept them there. One is an eminent Catholic statesman, and, even though what may be termed those against the Church had a vast majority—what is called the Left, not the Centre, or the Right, were in power there—they have always put in for years, I forget how many years, this eminent Catholic statesman, careless of what his religious opinions were, because they have found him a most able administrator. Now, Sir, I admit at once that when a party comes to elect an Executive it is very likely that the party in power in the House will get in most of the Executive; and quite right too; there is no harm in that: but what I object to is that this House has no power of election to the

Executive at all. Members have no voice in the selection of Ministers; they have never had a voice in their selection. I have been present when several Executives have been selected. I remember when the Executive in 1877 was selected. What voice had the House in the selection then? None whatever. Nor does it ever have any. That is our system. I do not deny that the party-government system, both as it is worked in England and as it is worked in the colonies, has its advantages. No one denies that. The question is not, Is it a good system or a bad system? but, Is the system proposed in this Bill a better one? For example, party government, no doubt, has brought to the front some questions that never would have achieved the prominence they have achieved but for party organizations. They, no doubt, have forced the country to pass measures that might not have been passed but for party organizations. All admit that. Party has its benefits. I need not refer to them; they are to be put on one side of the account, so far as party government is concerned. That there are a great many advantages and a great many benefits arising from party I do not deny; but I say the way party government has been worked, both here and in the other colonies, and is worked in America, is rousing people to attention as to whether the system cannot be revised and improved. The honourable member who moved the second reading of the Bill referred, I think, to Canada. In Canada they have a strong organization to bring about the very thing proposed in this Bill. There is the same now existing in Victoria; and I say now it has become—

An Hon. MEMBER.—What about New South Wales?

Sir R. STOUT.—I do not know what about New South Wales; but I say that every person who has read the history of the United States of America must realise the absolute need of getting some system like this, to get rid of the bribery and corruption that was shown at the elections there. What is it this Bill proposes to do? A great change is to be made. When each Parliament meets fresh from the people the Executive will be chosen. Is that an improper thing? I ask, ought not Parliament, newly elected and just come from the people, to choose the administrators? That is all that is asked. What is the next thing that is asked? It is this: that Parliament shall have the choosing of each Minister—that they shall be chosen by the House instead of the House selecting one man and leaving him to select his colleagues. Is that anything wrong? What, then, is the next point? Is there not, still remaining, control over Ministers? There is ample control. Any twenty members can ask that it shall be put to ballot to say whether the Executive as a whole or any individual Minister shall retire. What is there improper in that? The only argument used is that a Minister might be unpopular in the House because he could not give sufficient benefactions to members, and that there

would be intriguing against him, and he would be thrown out. That is not estimating the character of Parliament very highly. It is putting it at a low average to say the elected of the people will support an individual Minister because of the benefactions they are to get. Is there no chance, with millions going, that a majority of the House may keep a Ministry in power that will give them most of those millions? Is there no danger of corruption there? Where is the argument? The same argument may be used against a Ministry—that it does not give sufficient loan-money. Might not the same thing be applied to the Ministry as a whole? If we say that because a Minister could not give this road or that bridge he would be open to these intrigues to put him out, might there not be intrigues to put a Ministry out under the existing system? The argument cuts both ways, and it shows the enormous danger of having Parliament mixed up with loan-money. If loan-money is to go for roads and bridges, then you ought to have a form of government under which you can get rid of this, and you could do it in many ways. I do not think there is much validity in that. What does the Bill ask? It asks that an expression of confidence or no-confidence in the Executive should be given by every new Parliament. That, I think, is a proper step to take. And it also provides this: that no Executive and no Minister shall recommend the Governor to dissolve the House of Representatives without the consent of the House expressed by resolution thereon. That, I think, is a most valuable provision. I do not think it is fair that Parliament should be told, "If you do not vote for a Bill that I and my colleagues have brought in you shall be sent to your constituents." Is that a proper thing? Does that leave the Legislature free? I have heard that in this House even. What is that? Is that not declaring that, so far as this House is concerned, it is not free to legislate as it pleases—it has got to legislate under a threat? Now, the honourable member asks, How can a Minister legislate if there is the possible chance of his being balloted out? It may be more appositely asked, How can Parliament legislate with the possible chance that it will be balloted out without its consent? Sir, let us reflect how that works. The abolition of such a mischievous power as that is one of the most important provisions in the Bill. Then there are other provisions which I think would be most valuable, which the honourable member has not referred to. There is that, for example, by which Ministers would be able to go from one House to the other and explain their Bills, and urge the other House to deal with them. That, I think, is most important. And then there is another thing that I think also is important, and that is, that the Legislative Council shall have a voice in appointing the Executive, and so long as you have a second Chamber I think that is right. It does not give them at all any dominant influence; and I believe the necessary complements of this Bill are two: first, I believe you

Sir R. Stout

ought to have the Referendum to make this Bill complete; and, secondly, if you are to have a second Chamber you ought to have some provision for appointing members to that second Chamber. The present system, I think, does not work well. However, I do not wish to refer to that, because that would open up new matter. What, then, are the objections to this Bill? Simply these: The only difference between what is asked in this Bill, and the present system, is this: that under the present system one man elects his colleagues. He has a full power over his Ministry. They are practically creatures in his hands; he can do what he pleases with them; he can advise the Governor to remove a Minister; and I ask, is a Minister more independent who can be removed by the vote of one man than a Minister who requires to have the vote of half the members of the House recorded against him before he leaves his office?

An Hon. MEMBER.—More than half.

Sir R. STOUT.—Yes; one more than half of those who vote, because Ministers are not allowed to vote on the question themselves. How does the matter stand? So far as independence is concerned, I submit that Ministers would be placed in a much more independent position under this Bill. There is only one other thing I should like to point out, and that is this: I do not mean to say that this Bill is complete. There are many things that would have to be altered, perhaps, in our Standing Orders and forms of procedure. For example, we should require to have what are termed Grand Committees. I think we ought to have a Finance Committee. I think we ought to have a Public Works Committee. We ought to provide that the Parliament shall have more control over our estimates and over our expenditure. That ought to be sent to a Committee to deal with before coming to this House. That would relieve Ministers from pressure. We ought to have a Public Works Committee that would investigate each claim for every work that has to be done. That, I think, would be a most important Committee, and that again would relieve the Government from pressure, and get rid of the objection which has been raised—that if Ministers did not give benefactions, they would have intrigues at work against them. They have these Grand Committees, for example, in the United States Senate. There various Committees are set up which have almost what might be termed supreme executive power; and that system of Grand Committees has worked very well, so well, indeed, that the United States Senate has been abler, has done more useful work, and has been a more reliable body than the House of Representatives. I believe that is necessary to complete this Bill. Now, I ask this House, in dealing with this Bill, not to reject it because it is what is termed un-English. It is a most peculiar argument to use, that because it has not been approved of by English people, therefore we should not accept it. Not only are there a great many things passed in this Parliament that are contrary to any-

thing ever passed in England, but, if we are to say we are not to pass any measure until it has first been approved of by the Parliament of the United Kingdom, we shall have to wait a considerable number of years before we get our reform. I ask the House to keep this ideal before it: What ought we to have in a true democracy? We ought to have our ablest men as Executive officers—men selected because of their ability, of their honesty, and of their character. Ought we not to have our Legislature free to act as it thinks best, instead of being dominated over by any section or party? We do not want Whips to ask men to go into a lobby to vote for this or that. We do not want members to be asked to vote for any Bill that is presented to them, whether it is right or wrong. I do not deny that under this new system blunders might be committed. There may be blunders made under this system; but these blunders will be corrected by the people, and if members are found to be going against the interests of the people they will be made to answer for it at the next election. The only other argument I shall refer to is this: We are told that if we accept this system we shall have a tyranny of political associations outside. It is a peculiar argument coming from the honourable member for Christchurch City (Mr. Reeves). I understood he was in favour of political associations,—that he was in favour of trade-unions taking part in politics. Why, then, does the honourable member denounce political associations?

Mr. REEVES.—I did not; I denounced their tyranny.

Sir R. STOUT.—He denounced their tyranny! It becomes tyranny when they ask for something the honourable gentleman does not agree with; but if they ask for something he agrees with, then we are told that we ought to obey the mandates of the people. I do not understand whence the tyranny is derived. We can understand there are political associations outside who hold strong views on particular questions. Why should these associations not represent their views to members of this House? If they agree with them, they will support them; if not, they will vote against them. What I say is this: The tyranny outside is nothing to the tyranny inside. We are always liable to this if we have an Executive in office that has power to say to a district, "If your member does not vote with us he shall have no roads, he shall have no bridges, he shall have no railways for his district." That is worse tyranny than the tyranny of trades-unions or political bodies outside. I want to have a free Legislature, and under the present system we cannot have it. And as to this argument about people being "bossed" from the outside, they will be as much "bossed" now as they could be "bossed" if you had an elective Executive. What is to make the difference? Does the honourable member mean to say that this or any other Executive will stand without meeting political associations outside? They will only stand in this way: They may try to pull a member one way,

and the political association will try to pull him another, and the one who pulls strongest will get him. It is simply a choice of tyranny. Will you have an association outside to tyrannize, or an association of members to tyrannize inside? It is simply a selection; and I tell him this is selection with this difference: that inside it is not the member only who can be injured, whilst outside it is the member only who is injured: if he goes against his constituents' wishes he will be rejected at the next election; but if he does not vote according to what he is told inside the loss may be to his district. I have seen, time after time—I do not mean this session—this happening: that if a member has a certain Bill he will get that Bill passed, no matter how bad it may be, if he only supports the Government of the day; but if another man has a local Bill—a proper Bill, or a necessary Bill—Ministers will say, "We are not going to support that Bill; kick it out," because that member does not happen to support them. That has been done in New Zealand for the past twenty-five years; so in saying that I am not referring to this session at all.

Mr. SEDDON.—Sir, I must say that I have listened with pleasure to the debate upon this Bill. This is just a measure that we should debate temperately. Let us put to the country both sides of the question. I was rather pained to hear the honourable member for Selwyn say the Government were treating this matter with levity. It is to me a most serious matter. I believe there are very few members in this House—and I am sure few people in the country—who do not think seriously upon the question; but, at the same time, it is brought forward by an honourable member of good standing, who has devoted a considerable amount of time and attention to the matter; and hence it deserves our respect. But we have also listened to the speech of the honourable member for Wellington City, and we have here, on record in the parliamentary records, and in the public prints of the colony, the speeches made by the honourable member for Wellington City, word for word opposed to what he has said on the floor of this House to-night—speeches in which he painted as he alone can paint the baneful effects to this country if we were without party government. To commence with his speech to-night. He asked us to pay due weight to the report of this sub-committee. First he said, in that nice mild way he has, "I was not there when they came to this conclusion." It is quite true he was not there. But what occurred? He was present when the sub-committee was appointed.

Sir R. STOUT.—I said so.

Mr. SEDDON.—Who drew up this resolution? Of whom did the sub-committee consist? Mr. Saunders, the Hon. Major Steward, Mr. McNab, and Captain Russell. These gentlemen appointed—whom? They appointed Mr. Saunders, Major Steward, and Mr. McNab to draw up this resolution; and these were the three members present when this resolution was passed which the honourable gentleman asked

to be a guide to this House on the present occasion. What has happened on the floor of this House this very session? When the question of non-party government came up Captain Russell said he was opposed to it; yet we find he is present when this is done; and I ask, why this change? I ask honourable members, has Captain Russell during this session been found anywhere else but in the one lobby, and that against the Government, in nearly every division? I am not at all surprised that such a report should come down, and I should not be surprised if he had something to do with the drafting of the report. It would have been better to have come from the honourable member for Waitaki. It might be more effective to honourable members not so much behind the scenes.

Major STEWARD.—The honourable gentleman is entirely in error.

Mr. SEDDON.—What did the honourable member for Wellington City say here? This is what the senior member for Wellington City said to the electors of Dunedin:—

"I do not think it is necessary that I should make any apology for appearing before you as a candidate for Dunedin East. I have held political offices in Otago on various occasions, and I am not ashamed for you to look up the record of what I have done. But this evening I come forward on party grounds and for party purposes. I will explain to you in a few words what that means. You are all aware that we have what is termed 'representative government.' We have a Parliament that is called upon to administer our affairs, and wherever there is a Parliament elected for such a purpose party government is essential. If you do not have party government you descend into mere cliquism, and nothing but log-rolling and jobs. (Hear, hear.) But if you have strict party lines, if you have one party with some defined principle and another party with some defined principle, then you can hope to have really good government, each fighting for what they believe to be best. No one can say, for example, that one party is all right and the other party all wrong. You must give credit to the people in different parties for having good intentions, and for doing what they believe to be best for the colony. But, though we give them credit for that, we have a right to examine their creed, to find out what their principles are, and to vote according as we find

10.30. them. And I say that if a man goes into any House of Parliament to vote alone, and stand alone, and to be drifted about on every motion, first on this side and then on that side—(loud laughter and hisses)—he can do no credit to himself and no credit to any constituency that elects him. (Applause and disapprobation.) I do not say that such a man may not have his place in our political world; but I say no man has ever gone into Parliament, however high his intellectual endowments and sincere his professions and ideas, and done any good, unless he has allied himself with some party, and led others on to do what he believes to be right. Why, I could appeal

to England; I could appeal to other countries; but I would rather say what an able English writer has said, speaking on this very subject. When a short time ago it was suggested that Herbert Spencer should be elected for Leicester, what did he say?"

At one time the honourable member was very much in love with Herbert Spencer.

Sir R. STOUT.—So I am still.

Mr. SEDDON.—I will continue reading:—

"He [Herbert Spencer] could not ally himself with either party; therefore he thought he had no right to go into the English House of Commons. He would there be standing alone, and unable to influence either party to do what he believed to be right; and, as an able English writer has said, 'A Hebrew prophet has no business in a temple of Baal.' (Laughter.) If a man is so pure and conscientious that he cannot ally himself with any political party, then he has no business in a House where party government rules. Now, it is all nonsense to say that there are not two political parties. I say there are two parties in the New Zealand Parliament.

"A VOICE: There are half a dozen.

"Mr. STOUT: A gentleman says there are half a dozen, and I should like to know who is to blame for that. I say it is the electors, who have elected men who could not tell them to what party they belonged, but who said they were what was termed 'independent.' (Applause.) I say that one cause of the bad government of New Zealand, one cause of our depression, one cause of our jobs, one cause of our log-rolling, is this: that men have gone into the House and floated about without any defined party principles, and unable to unite with parties, and any person who flattered them for the moment got their vote. (Hear, hear.) And, gentlemen, I ask you to think of this. I ask you to bear with me whilst I tell you what the party is that I belong to, and what the parties have done in the past. I can assure you that when I was in the House of Representatives—and even in the two last Houses of Representatives, of which I was not a member—I could have taken up a card of the members and upon almost any question you could name I could have ticked off how the members would have voted, because I knew them and the political principles that actuated them; and it is only to their credit that it should be so. I say that if a man has no political principle, so that he cannot make up his mind how he is to vote, he is of no use as a representative of the people. (Applause.) Now, I want you to see to what party I belong, and to give you an idea—as there may be many who do not know the political history of this colony for some years back—of what the two parties have done. Let me show you first what I call the true Liberal party—which has been in opposition now for five years, and which was in opposition for many years before—attempted to do. When I was in the House, what did we find? You are aware that Major Atkinson's party carried the abolition of the provinces, and by so doing they did a wrong to

Mr. Seddon

New Zealand. (Hear, hear.) What did we find? We found that we were not able to do anything for true Liberalism unless we obtained some extension of the franchise; and to that we addressed our first efforts. I do not intend to speak of what Sir George Grey did to get the franchise extended. When we were in office in 1878 we introduced the Electoral Bill and the Bribery Bill. We had prepared a Representation Bill; and a Triennial Parliaments Bill was introduced and lost. We found that the first thing to do was to obtain a true representation of the people, and that if we could obtain it we should be able to carry out those political and social reforms which we believed the colony required. Now, let me tell you what were the views of the other party on this question. And I will read to you two short extracts from speeches of Sir John Hall showing what was the attitude of his party, and I say that it is the same party which is in power now. What was the attitude of his party to the extension of the franchise? This is what Sir John Hall said:—

“I am one of those who deny that there is any abstract right on the part of any section of the body politic to any particular share of political power. I deny that, because a man has to obey the laws, he has necessarily a right to a voice in the making of them. That is a popular theory; but I have never been able to find that it is founded upon any substantial basis. . . . If I thought this Bill would cause any great extension of the franchise I should not be prepared to support it, because I think the franchise is practically low enough; and, so far as I know, that is the general opinion in the part of the colony in which I live.”

“That was the opinion of Sir John Hall. It is all nonsense to say there are no Tories in New Zealand. Those men were opposing any extension of the franchise in New Zealand, and they did all in their power to burke our Bill, and they succeeded. Then I ask you to look at this question of triennial Parliaments. What was the attitude of Major Atkinson and Mr. Rolleston—members of the present Ministry—on this subject of triennial Parliaments? They both voted against the Bill; and not only so, but we found that on every question in which there was anything like Liberalism they were always against us.”

That speech was delivered by the honourable member for Wellington City (Sir R. Stout) in Dunedin in 1884. I will now quote the honourable member's remarks in moving a motion of want of confidence in the Atkinson Government in the session of 1884. The honourable member is reported to have spoken as follows on the 29th of August in that year:—

“Is it to be said for one moment that the sole use of the dissolution, the sole benefit from all the expense incurred by an election at such a time, was to change some of the colleagues of the Premier? If such an issue were put to the country what would be the verdict? Can it be said for one moment that taking in two or

three of his party and leaving out two or three of his party, and taking in one or two pledged to the Opposition, and pledged to follow the leader the Opposition might choose, whoever he might be, forms a new Ministry? I say that it does not form a new Ministry. The policy of the Ministry must be the same; and I will state to the House why. Can it be supposed that the Premier and the Minister for Public Works, because they have been two or three weeks out of office, have changed their opinion—that they have some new policy which they have perhaps discovered in the lobbies? The thing is perfectly patent that they have come back to office with the same policy; that we shall have the same administration and the same Continuous Ministry continued. Now, what, I ask, will be the effect of that? First, I say that we, as representatives of the people, are not fulfilling our duty if we permit this. I go further, and I quote the words of one of the most eloquent men in this House. In one of his election speeches he said, ‘It would be a most disastrous thing for the colony if defeated Ministers were to turn round and combine with the Opposition merely for the sake of office.’ I quite agree with that, which was the sentiment expressed by the honourable member for Selwyn. What, then, does this combination mean? I apprehend that the Ministry will not say that the combination has been between the Hon. the Premier and members of the Opposition; because that would be most disastrous to the colony.”

Further on he says, “What is the meaning of parliamentary government if it be not that there shall be changes of our Administrators?”

Sir R. STOUT.—Hear, hear.

Mr. SEDDON.—“Hear, hear,” says the honourable gentleman. Is that the reason why this Bill is brought forward? He wants a change in the Administration. In the same speech the honourable gentleman went on to say,—

“If it were wished to get rid of parliamentary government, then what should we have? We should have Executive officers of the colony elected as you, Sir, are elected—namely, elected by the House for a definite term—for a period fixed, perhaps, by law. That is the opposite of the parliamentary system. The parliamentary system means the ‘ins’ and ‘outs.’ And why does it mean the ‘ins’ and ‘outs’? Because the English people have recognized this, and we have followed them: that if we are to have new ideas in carrying on a Government, if we are to have something like a change even in our policy, it can only be accomplished by bringing in new men,—by bringing in men not accustomed to run in particular grooves. That is the reason why there have been ‘ins’ and ‘outs’ in England, and that is the reason why there have sometimes been ‘ins’ and ‘outs’ in England independently altogether of the desire of the people for a mere change of policy.”

I think the honourable member has answered

in these remarks in *Hansard*, and by the speech he made to the electors of Dunedin, every word he has uttered in this debate. But, Sir, he evidently at one time was in love with the English system of government; and what has caused this change? I say that all the reforms that have been made in the Mother-country have taken place since there has been party government. The reforms we have had in this colony have also taken place under party government. Compare the condition of the people of this country with that of the people of Switzerland; and I say, give us party government. May New Zealand and the New-Zealanders never be in the wretched and unfortunate position in which the Swiss are to-day. I say—and I speak with some authority on the subject, for I absolutely know it to be the case—that the women of Switzerland are absolute slaves. And it is not the same as in other countries, where the men make the women work, but both men and women, mother and daughter, and father and son—each has to toil from early morning to late at night for a miserable existence. We are asked to follow such an example. I am sorry for the Government of New Zealand when such a condition is held up as an example for us to follow. Is it intended by this that we are to weaken our ties with the Mother-country? What is the position of the representative of the Crown with this elective Executive? The representative of the Mother-country is considered to be a factor in connection with New Zealand politics. The honourable gentleman has voted in favour of an elective Governor.

Mr. O'REGAN.—Hear, hear.

Mr. SEDDON.—“Hear, hear,” says the honourable member for Inangahua, and I am not at all surprised to hear that coming from him; but I say that this must be considered in dealing with this question, or, if you do not consider it, you are voting in the dark. Then, the honourable gentleman—and this is what I take exception to—made a covert attack upon the Government. He said that we should by this system have as Ministers men of good character. Does he for a moment intend by that to imply that we have ever had in New Zealand Ministers who were bad characters? I have been here since 1879, and I know of no Minister whose character could be held up to the reproach of the people of New Zealand. I never knew a Ministry or Minister whose character would not bear the closest scrutiny, and I do take exception to the honourable gentleman's statement in that respect. I say, seeing that the system of party government has succeeded so well, there should not be this reproach cast at Ministers. The honourable gentleman says my colleague did not touch the Bill. I undertake to say that from beginning to end of the question we are debating on the second reading—it is not a question of Committee objections—the general principle is now before us, and the question is, Would the principle of the Bill be conducive to the good government of the country? My answer is, Certainly not; and I

Mr. Seddon

shall prove it before I sit down. The question of removing Ministers by a vote of the House is in force at the present time by a no-confidence motion, and whenever there is a majority in the House the majority must rule. The honourable gentleman has claimed that majorities must and should rule; but by this Bill it is not a majority that would rule; but combinations: and those combinations of minorities would join together for a purpose. For what? To elect those who would be able to log-roll for the sake of something that might not be at all in the interest of the State: and they are to be the Executive for the time being. And the Bill says there is to be a vote by ballot. If there is anything I should dislike to see in an Assembly where there are representative men the choice of the people, it is that by ballot they may cast a reproach upon men who had been previously elected, as the Executive would be elected. How long is this to continue, and what would be the position of Ministers under such an unfortunate condition? I say it is un-British, and I regret that such a thing should have appeared in a Bill dealing with such an important subject. And I tell the honourable gentleman that the question has not been before the electors of New Zealand. There have been some few members who, undoubtedly, have mentioned the question during the elections, but members have not at all been elected on that platform. The honourable member for Wellington City himself, when he first commenced his election campaign, stated that he desired to abolish party altogether: but he was elected to support the Liberal party. That he cannot deny.

Sir R. STOUT.—I admitted it on the platform.

Mr. SEDDON.—The honourable gentleman first stated that was his platform. Afterwards he found that public opinion was against him throughout the colony, and he said he was going in to support the Liberal party. The honourable gentleman said that he had written on the question for twenty-seven years. It is a strange thing that he was in the Ministry in 1878, and that he was in the Ministry from 1884 to 1887, and, having written on the subject for twenty-seven years, when the opportunity was given him, he being a Minister, and having the confidence of the country during the whole time that he was in power, he never said one word in favour of it, but, on the contrary, told the people of the country that if they wanted to have log-rolling and bad government, and to have incomplete measures, they must go in for an Elective Cabinet. Then, we have America quoted. I regret to say that, while I have a great liking for that country, and while we have a great deal to learn from it and its people on this point, no worse argument could be used in favour of this Bill. The President, who is elected by the people, nominates his Ministers; and who is it that elects the President? Why, to this presidential election are due all the evils that the country labours under; and I am quite sure, if we had an elective Executive, we should have the same evils here. What

happened in connection with the rings in New York—in connection with the sugar rings and the sugar trust? Has there not been an impeachment? “Bought senators:” that is what the accusation has been. And this is what we are asked to follow. I hope we shall do nothing of the kind. Then, as regards “the spoils to the victors,” I say this colony is singularly clear from anything of the kind, and the reproach should not be cast on any Ministry, nor upon the present Ministry. As regards the question of the Railway Commissioners, there is Mr. Ronayne, almost an unknown railway official, brought into the position of Commissioner; there is Mr. McKerrow, an official who might be considered as opposed altogether to the present Government and party, made Chairman, with a vetoing power. How can there be spoils to the victors in a case of this sort? Then, as regards the commercial world, another outsider was brought in, whose skill and whose knowledge of railway matters are proving the Government right in making the appointment. Then, the honourable gentleman said that in Switzerland they had Roman Catholic statesmen. I think the honourable gentleman might have left this question out altogether, for if we are to be guided by this standard we may say in New Zealand we have statesmen of the Catholic faith who have proved themselves in New Zealand as good as those in other places. But the honourable gentleman has denied them right along privileges in a way which is not altogether creditable; nor should he cast a reproach upon them. In conclusion, I would say that the commencement of this question with regard to an elective Executive seems to have been a reproach to the Liberal party. I say the Liberal party has been for many years working as against the classes in this country; and now, when an opportunity is given for its fruits to be given to those who have toiled late and early—when it is not a question of doing anything wrong to any party, but when the people reign supreme, and there is opportunity for reform to be carried in the country—if we relinquished this, and sought to leap in the dark, as proposed by this measure, we should not be true to the people who sent us here, and should not be doing our duty to this country.

Sir R. STOUT.—May I make a personal explanation? I say that I have nothing to withdraw from the speech I made at Dunedin. The honourable gentleman has misapprehended what I said here and in Dunedin. I did not say to-night that party government should cease. I said we should still have party, whatever happened. I said that, though men would be returned according to their particular creeds, that did not touch at all on the question of an elective Executive. Again, I am not aware that I cast any reproach on Roman Catholics or any other religious body.

Mr. O'REGAN.—Before I express my opinion on this Bill I should like to explain that, in supporting the measure, I desire to cast no reflection on this Ministry or any other. I am not dealing personally with any member of the

Ministry or with the Ministry itself. I am a firm believer in the Bill, and mean to support it. But, in condemning the present system of government, I do not speak of the Ministers, but of the system of which the Ministers, in common with their followers, are victims. It is a mistake, in my opinion, to speak of the abolition of party government. It would be more correct to say “the abolition of government by faction.” Whether the Ministry are elective or not, there always will be party so long as there is difference of opinion: so long as there are some who want to go forward, and others who wish to remain stationary, there must be party. But the question now before the House is not the abolition of party, but how the party should appoint its Ministry—in other words, to use a homely expression,

11.30. “Shall the dog wag the tail, or the tail wag the dog?” That is the question now before the House. I cannot help saying that, although the Minister of Education made a very able speech to-night, he carefully fenced the main points of this Bill. One of the strongest objections I heard him raise to the Bill was that there were black coats and no *Hansard* in the Swiss Parliament. But are there no empty formalities and meaningless customs in our procedure? What, in the name of common-sense, is the meaning of the Governor's Speech, the Speech from the Throne? What is the meaning of moving and seconding the Address in Reply? What are these, any more or less than empty formalities?

An Hon. MEMBER.—Was your speech an empty formality?

Mr. O'REGAN.—I did not say it was. The speech of the Hon. the Minister of Education to-night, however, was very empty if he could find no stronger objections to the Bill than that Swiss members of Parliament wore black coats. And then the honourable gentleman said Switzerland was behind New Zealand in the matter of labour legislation, and he drew a very horrible picture of the state of things existing in that country. Perhaps it will be news to the honourable gentleman to learn that as far back as 1877 there was a Factory Act passed in Switzerland, under the provisions of which no child under the age of fifteen years is allowed to work in a factory. The honourable gentleman treated us to what might be called a light oratorical refreshment, but he never touched the main points of the Bill. With all due deference to the honourable gentleman, I would ask him to treat the matter a little more seriously. It is all very well to pooh-pooh the question of abolishing party government, but that question is now exercising the whole of the civilised world. You have only to read the reviews of the day to see the numerous articles that are now being written by the most eminent writers on the question of abolishing party government, and, if we read the American and English papers, we see that this question of the abolition of what might more properly be termed government by faction is one that is permeating the mind of the English-speaking world. Then,

again, the Premier tells us that in Switzerland men, women, and children are starving. Well, Sir, I fail to see that that is any argument against the Swiss system of government being introduced into New Zealand. The honourable gentleman has only to go to England to find starvation, and I am not at all sure that he will not find people starving in this colony. If we are to judge her system of government by the social condition of England, or even of these colonies, then the verdict will be very severe indeed against the present system of government. The Premier also told us that England and these colonies have progressed under the system of party government. Sir, that is very much like saying that, as Europe has progressed under a system of standing armies, therefore standing armies are a very good thing. It is just like saying that America has progressed under the McKinley Protective tariff, and that therefore this wretched Protective tariff is a very good thing. Not very long ago, when there was a boom in Victoria, we all heard Protectionists referring to Victoria as an instance of how a colony could progress under a Protective tariff. I say that it would be more correct to say that Victoria has progressed in spite of Protection, rather than because of it. And we have progressed here in New Zealand in spite of party government. Look at some of the most eminent statesmen of England—for instance, John Bright. His whole public career was a protest against party government. There were times when that gentleman had serious differences with his party, and on one occasion he actually resigned his seat in the Ministry.

An Hon. MEMBER.—Was he not a party man?

Mr. O'REGAN.—Yes, Sir, and so am I a strong party man; and there are many honourable gentlemen who are staunch adherents of the Liberal party, but who are against the present system of party government. This proposition which we have before us in the Bill is not a proposition to abolish party. The Liberal party will still exist, but it will be a party divided upon principle for party measures, and that is the kind of party we want. I think every honourable gentleman will admit that any institution can be judged by its results. We can judge the tree by its fruits; and what are the fruits of party government? Its effects upon the people are most demoralising. It is even now a common opinion among the people that the members of this House are not men of their word; and that is having a demoralising effect on the public mind. I am compelled to say that the verdict which the people pass upon public men is not at all unjustifiable; because what do we find under the present system of party government? We find that a representative on the public platform makes certain pledges, and gives utterance to certain convictions; and what does he find when he comes to this House? He finds that he has to vote against his convictions in order to support his party. Every honourable member in this House knows that what I say is correct. There are many honourable gentlemen who

have voted against their convictions; and, in fact, I have done so myself.

Hon. MEMBERS.—Oh, oh!

Mr. O'REGAN.—Honourable members may say, "Oh, oh!" but they know very well that if they have to choose between the less of two evils they must often vote against their convictions. I ask, is it a good system of government which compels a man to break his pledges and belie his convictions? Certainly it is not. One of the greatest intellects of the present century is Herbert Spencer; and what does he say on the question of party government in one of his latest books?

An Hon. MEMBER.—What about the single-tax?

Mr. O'REGAN.—The honourable gentleman is not going to draw a red-herring across the scent. I can deal with that question at the proper time. I am not afraid to speak my own convictions, no matter how hostile the opposition may be. I have done so before, and can do so again. Herbert Spencer says, in "Ethics of Social Life," page 14,—

"'But party loyalty necessitates this sacrifice of private convictions' is the excuse put in. Yes; party loyalty has come to be a fancied virtue to which the real virtue of veracity is to be sacrificed. Whence comes the alleged virtue of party loyalty? In what system of ethics does it find a place? It is simply a dishonest mode of conduct disguised by a euphemistic phrase. It is simply demerit assuming the garb of merit.

"So utter is the vitiation of sentiments and ideas produced by the system that the few who will not conform to it are vilified, and represented as hindering political action. In America, where party organization is more developed than here, whoever declines to surrender his convictions and follow in the mob which is led by a 'boss' to the polls is labelled with the contemptuous name of 'Mugwump,' and is condemned as pharisaic and as of an unsocial disposition. In the 'land of liberty' it has become a political crime to act on your own judgment. Representative government, rightly so called, has become a sham, under the disguise of which there exists an oligarchy of office-holders, office-seekers, and men who exercise irresponsible power.

"So far is party government from being an appliance for carrying out the national will, it continually becomes an appliance for overriding the national will. A Ministry raised to power by electors, many of whom have been misled by promises never to be fulfilled, represents, perhaps, the predominant opinion of the nation on some leading question. Once in office, the chiefs of the party, backed by a compact majority, can for years do with a free hand many things they were never commissioned to do. By the aid of submissive supporters, prompted by party loyalty, a small knot of men, headed by one of great influence, enacts this or that law, which, were it put to a *plébiscite*, would be decisively rejected. Thus, in a second way, too, party government defeats representative government. A single man, with his troop of

Mr. O'Regan

obedient servants, can for some time impose his own will on the nation, just as he might do were he a despotic king.

"But how can public life be carried on in any other way?" This question is thought to embody an unanswerable defence of party government. Says an American, whose advocacy of the system I have just been reading, 'Every public measure must have one party in its favour and another against it. There never can be more than two parties on living practical issues.' Here the fallacy is transparent. The argument implies that a party has never more than one question to decide. It assumes that those who agree with its leaders on some issue which brought them into office will agree with its leaders on all other issues which may arise during their term of office—an absurd assumption. But a further question is put: 'How is a Ministry to retain office unless its opinion subordinates the individual opinions of its supporters; and what must happen if Ministries are perpetually thrown out by the votes of recalcitrant members of their parties?' Here we have one among countless illustrations of errors caused by assuming one thing to be changed while other things remain unchanged. If politicians were conscientious; if, as a result, no one would vote for a thing which he did not believe good; and if, consequently, the body of representatives fell, as it must do, not into two large parties, but into a number of small parties and independent members, no Ministry could count upon anything like a constant majority. What would happen? A Ministry would no longer be required to resign when in a minority, but would simply accept the lesson which a division gave it. It would not, as now, be for a time the master of the House, but would be always the servant of the House; not dictating a policy to it, but accepting that which was found to be its policy. Hence, no measure could be carried unless it obtained the sincere support of the average of its many parties, and was thereby proved to be most likely in accordance with the national will. If, as may be contended, this would lead to great delay in the passing of measures, the reply is, 'So much the better.' Political changes should never be made save after overcoming great resistances.

"But, apart from these considerations, the ethical dictum is clear. There are lies told by actions as well as lies told by words, and ethics give no more countenance to one than to the other. As originating from ultimate laws of right conduct, beneficence and veracity must go together; and political beneficence will be shown by insisting on political veracity."

And Sir Henry Maine says on this question,—

"He would infer, from actual observation, that the party man here [in the British House of Commons] was debarred by his position from the full practice of the great virtues of veracity, justice, and moral intrepidity. He could seldom tell the full truth; he could never be fair to persons other than his followers and

associates; he could rarely be bold, except in the interests of his faction. The picture drawn by him would be one which few living men would deny to be correct, though they might excuse its occurrence in nature on the score of moral necessity."

And hear what the great Liberal leader, John Morley, has to say about party government:—

"On the one hand, a leader is lavishly panegyricized for his high-mindedness in suffering himself to be driven into his convictions by his party. On the other, a party is extolled for its political tact in suffering itself to be forced out of its convictions by its leader. It is hard to decide which is the more discreditable and demoralising sight."

Now, Sir, my contention with regard to legislative measures introduced is simply this: that honourable members should vote on the merits of a Bill, and not because this member or that member has introduced it, or because it is a Government measure, but for the reason that it is a good measure, and is in the interests of the community. Under this party system, if the Government in power is a strong one it is the dominant party, and has a large number of subservient followers. It can actually kill any Bill it chooses. I do not say this in disparagement of the present Ministry, because I think it is one of the best we have had for many years; but I blame the present system of government. The system embodied in this Bill proposes to make it possible for honourable members to follow their own convictions. Under it they would no longer be compelled to belie their platform utterances. They would be able to support measures or to oppose measures just as they thought fit, without interference by the Government Whip. Because this Bill would abolish party log-rolling and allay political corruption,—because I believe the Bill would have these beneficial effects,—I intend to support it.

Mr. McGOWAN.—I shall only occupy the time of the House, Sir, for a very few moments on this question. The honourable gentleman who introduced this Bill took up most of his hour in giving us extracts from Committee reports and different writers on the subject, and all those extracts were chosen from writers viewing the case from his own point of view. Any honourable gentleman could, with equal force, quote a number of authorities to bear out the other side of the question. The only real argument the honourable gentleman introduced in favour of the Bill was that time would be saved in the House by the new elective method; but he has failed to show how any time would be saved. The honourable member for Selwyn referred to the present system as being autocratic, and a one-man Government, and so on. Now, I do not see that that honourable gentleman in any way proved that statement by showing that the leader or the Premier of the Government would be an autocrat. Of course in one respect he might be considered to be a leader, but how that could be a one-man Government I do not know,

when, as a matter of fact, we know that each member of the Ministry is supreme in his own department, and all questions affecting the general policy are put to the vote in the ordinary way. The honourable gentleman also referred—and I believe this carried the sympathies of this House more than anything else—to the abolition of the provinces. That particular statement carried more sympathy in this House than any other argument that has been used in reference to the question. The honourable member for Wellington City (Sir R. Stout), of course, spoke very learnedly, and also very pleasantly, upon this subject, and gave us a good deal of American history, and he referred to the Railway Commissioners as being an instance of the evils of party government.

Sir R. STOUT.—I said, of “spoils to the victors.”

Mr. McGOWAN.—It is only putting my statement in another way. The question of the Railway Commissioners was a question decided in this House and carried in this House, and in that particular case any changes that take place are made with the will of this House. Now, Sir, there are just one or two things I should like to say in reference to the position taken up by gentlemen who are in favour of elective government, and in doing so I should like to point out that a very little example is worth a great deal of precept. We have had experience of elective government in the shape of directors of companies, and we know of instances where gentlemen holding the very highest positions in England, and very high positions in the first Legislature of the world, have been made company directors; and we know what has happened in such cases. The House will recognise the company to which I refer. Now, an example was given also by the honourable gentleman who introduced the Bill. He instanced the machinery of a watch, as to every part being made to work in unison. But that is where the mistake comes in. Under the elective system you would not have the best men, but you would have the most popular men in the Assembly elected to carry on the business of the country. You would have a class of men who would have no interest in working in the interests of the country: in fact, instead of measures it would be men, and it would necessarily resolve itself into a question of party. But it would be a party of “men” instead of a party of “measures.” Under our present system it must be a system of measures, because it is upon the nature of their measures that the Government hold their position. Therefore I think that a party chosen on account of measures must be superior to a party selected for the men only. Now let us come to the question of elective government. We have it already in our local bodies; and the honourable member (Sir R. Stout) went on to say that the system of local government is superior to the system we have in this House. I say, No. Every member of a local body, in point of fact, whether he is a member of a

County Council or of a Road Board—in such cases I could point to instances where roads have been made to the benefit, and to the interest, perhaps, of the County Chairman or of others—

An Hon. MEMBER.—What about the property vote?

Mr. McGOWAN.—The honourable gentleman asks, “What about the property vote?” but I fail to see that that question comes in in reference to this particular Bill. It is a question of elective government. But I fail to see where elective government is any improvement upon the system we have now. An instance has been given by an honourable gentleman who has been in Switzerland, and he has told us of the condition of the people there, where elective government is in existence. An instance was given of the women and the dogs and cows drawing carts in the streets. That is an instance in reference to that country which is held out as an example for New Zealand to follow.

An Hon. MEMBER.—That is not so bad as Ireland or England.

Mr. McGOWAN.—The honourable gentleman cannot point to any instance in Ireland of the women drawing carts in the roads.

An Hon. MEMBER.—They carry the loads on their backs—they have not got carts.

Mr. McGOWAN.—If this Bill were carried into law where would the cry be of “Trust the people” which we have so often heard this session? Where would the people be if the Executive were elected for a period of three years? The Government might carry out any proposals they liked without being amenable to the country. But under the present system they are amenable to the country. The gentlemen who are supporting this measure are really the gentlemen who are out of office, and who are anxious to get into power. They are the gentlemen opposite; and with them is another class of honourable gentlemen who, unfortunately for themselves, have made certain pledges to support a particular party, and now they find, after having made these pledges, they would like to have a free hand, but they cannot have it on account of having made these pledges. That is the position they are in just now. I intend to oppose this Bill.

Mr. HOGG.—Sir, some few years ago I thought that party government was a mistake. That was when we had a certain Ministry in office; and it is only now with the party in power that my views have become somewhat modified, because we have at last the right party in power. I hope this Bill will not be used to disturb the party we have now in office, because I believe they are carrying out the will and the wishes of the country. If I had any grave doubt on the subject at all, if I had less confidence in party government, I believe that the extraordinary exhibition we have had to-night would have converted me against the Bill. What have we had? We have had Mr. Stout of 1884 on Sir Robert Stout of the present time. It is a most extraordinary exhibition, because it shows how some of our greatest men—

Mr. McGowan

leading political lights—change their political views after a few years. In all probability the honourable gentleman thinks that he has a perfect right to alter his views, and there is no doubt that he has that right, and so long as he changes his views in the right direction no one can possibly complain. I assume, no matter what may be the opinions of honourable members in this House, that the honourable gentleman is under the impression that he has arrived at “that perfect state” on which he is so fond of lecturing and expressing his views. I have read the honourable gentleman’s speeches of some years ago; and one thing is clear—that the Mr. Stout of former days was very different, politically and otherwise, from the honourable gentleman who is now representing the City of Wellington. That gentleman, who is at the present time the champion of an elective Executive, instead of the champion he formerly was of party government,—that gentleman mentioned this evening—and this is the reason why I am addressing the House—that under the present system Government supporters were enabled to pass Bills that might be of a vicious character, whereas Government opponents, who might have local Bills of a very useful character indeed, were unable to pass them. I would ask whether that has been my experience within the last day or two. I have had a local Bill, which I believe to be of a most useful character to the district I represent, and although I am a Government supporter, and a consistent Government supporter, I certainly cannot speak in favour of the way in which the Government supported that Bill. Again, on the very same occasion that my Bill was rejected—and I say a more just Bill was never brought before this House—on that very afternoon that my Bill, which was simply intended to secure justice for the country settlers, was successfully opposed, the senior member for Wellington City supported the Wellington City Drainage Bill which on a previous occasion had been opposed by the Government. What did we find? We found that it was no longer opposed, but allowed to pass into law. On that occasion a Bill which was supported by the opponents of the Government, which the Government had not been inclined to pass, was passed without any attempt on the part of the Government to stop it; whereas a Bill of a just character, which, in the interests of my constituents, I endeavoured to get passed, was not supported in the way I had expected it would be supported by the Government. It was opposed by the senior member for Wellington City, and opposed successfully. That honourable gentleman says he wants a free Legislature, and that we want government by Committees. What kind of a Government should we have, I wonder! We have a very good illustration of what government by Committees might prove in the way in which the affairs of municipal bodies are frequently managed. I think that a millennium of cats and dogs would be likely to ensue if this Elective Executive Bill were passed into law. The honourable gentleman gave us an illustration of the condition of Switzerland,

but it seems to me, Sir, he endeavoured to depreciate the colony to which he owes his present position. I did not think any member of this House would have shown such a poor spirit as to attempt to raise the political character of a portion of the world with which he evidently has very little acquaintance, at the expense of the colony to which he owes everything in life. We find during the present session the honourable gentleman railing not only against the colony, but against those Government measures which are being passed not only at the instigation of members of this House, but at the instigation of the people of New Zealand. Why all this complaint? Why all this lecturing night after night? Is it not because the honourable gentleman is hankering after office—because he believes that somebody left him a legacy, and some one else stepped in and took that legacy away from him? Is it not in bitter disappointment? I say that no honourable gentleman who is fit for the position of a statesman ought to take a course of that kind. I

12.0. have studied this question, and I admit that, at first sight, an elective Executive and the abolition of party government present certain advantages. In the first place it would appear to honourable members that if that system were carried into operation it would abolish the struggles which we see for office. Then, again, it would make members the masters of the position, and not the servants of a Ministry. Then, it is said it would secure as our administrators the ablest men that we could find. Another strong argument in favour of it is this: that the lives of Governments would not be dependent on the acceptance or rejection of their measures—in other words, that the stability of the Government of the day would be more firmly established than it is under the party system. What should we have? We should have the Government of the country in the position of a vessel in which there is a captain who is not responsible for the appointment of his crew; and what would, in all probability, be the consequence of that? The consequence would be that the crew would be more or less in a mutinous condition throughout the voyage. We have good illustrations of what would ensue in our local bodies. Those local bodies are elected by the ratepayers; they are elected independently of the chairman or Mayor; and what do we find? Continual wrangling: instead of a happy family working together, you find them frequently disjointed and disconnected, one representative pulling against another, no harmony whatever; and the result is, there is no progress. We had a very good illustration of that not so long ago in the goings-on at a place called Onehunga. We have seen how the lady Mayor and the members of the Council work together there. Not very long ago we had another vivid illustration of the same state of things in the City of Christchurch: we found the Mayor there in conflict with the Councillors. And in Masterton we had for years an exhibition of a Mayor who was unable to work along with the Councillors. I maintain that

it is absolutely necessary to the success of government that between the members of the Government there should be a thoroughly good understanding. They must, to a certain extent, preserve the same harmony we expect in a well-regulated family circle. They must meet together as members of the Cabinet, they must talk over the affairs of the country together; and if they are not on good terms with each other, if the man at the head is not allowed to select his associates when a new Government is formed, you cannot expect legislation that will be either smooth or useful to the country. It is impossible to expect it. If we are going to preserve harmony in our legislative machinery it is necessary we should have entire harmony in our Cabinet; and if we are going to have harmony in our Cabinet it is necessary that Ministers should be appointed by one man—that the Premier should have the selection of his colleagues. While I admit that the abolition of party government presents great advantages, still, after giving this question a large amount of attention, I have come to the conclusion that we should make a great mistake if we did anything to disturb the present system of government, which I believe is doing so much for the benefit of the country.

Mr. CROWTHER.—I have been a member of local bodies for seventeen or eighteen years, and never during the whole of my experience have I experienced the difficulties stated by the last speaker. If there is anything I feel proud of it is the success of our local bodies in Auckland. I cannot speak for any other district or for any other person. The statement of the Minister of Labour that it was a great mistake to abolish the provinces has my entire sympathy. I believe that act was a great mistake. If the provincial system had been continued the various districts would have been in a better position than they are in to-day; their affairs would have been more cheaply administered, and there would have been more satisfaction throughout the country. I am pleased that this measure has been introduced. There is no doubt there is some necessity for a different system on the floor of this House from that which exists at present. Whether we are or are not in favour of this measure, we certainly can spend a profitable hour or two in discussing what we may do hereafter to enable us to do the business on the floor of this House to the satisfaction of the greatest number. I look upon this measure as very much in the same order of things as the "one man one vote," the women's franchise, the amendment of the Standing Orders, *et cetera*. These are all matters which seem to be following one another in the right direction. Like the honourable member for the Thames, I am not a secker after office. I am not suffering any disappointment, and I am not fighting for office. Therefore some remarks which have been made in this respect have no application so far as I am concerned. There was a statement made by the Premier which I was somewhat surprised at. He said if we pass this measure we are going practically to sever our relationship with the Mother-

country. Why, if there is one thing more than another which has been advocated on the Liberal platform and by Liberals generally it is that we shall elect the members of the other House and elect our Governors. To-night we are told that it would be a very dangerous thing to do, on the ground that it would lessen and practically sever our relation with the Mother-country. I am not at all afraid of the result even if we were to do that to-day. We are able to go on in our own fashion, and work our own way without any aid from the Mother-country. Whatever arrangement we may make, we shall have to compensate it for advantages received. I think that is the only relationship which it is necessary for us at this time to keep up. Whatever we may go to the Mother-country for I take it we shall have to pay for. The statement has been made more than once that members of this House, during the course of six, seven, or ten years, have altered their opinions. Well, it would be very strange indeed if, during the course of events, members did not change their opinions. Circumstances may arise to make it absolutely necessary for men to alter their opinions in the course of ten years. Whatever statements might have been made in 1884 by the honourable member for Wellington City (Sir R. Stout) in Dunedin may not possibly have the slightest application to the circumstances of to-day. There is scarcely any gentleman of pronounced principles who can go along year after year without altering his opinions as new circumstances arise with a view to the progress of the country. We must follow absolutely the necessities and the condition of things as they arise, or else we are not equal to the occasion, and when emergencies arise we lag behind; and are not able to meet such emergencies. Therefore, I say, we are obliged to alter our opinions as new conditions arise. Not only that, but during the last few years in New Zealand we have held ourselves up as a progressive people, and we are being quoted as legislators whose acts are to be imitated. In this measure I can see something which is worthy of support. I do not see anything in it which is going in the direction of lessening the influence of Ministers, or which is likely to interfere with the present occupants of those benches. I believe, if this Bill were passed, the present Ministry would occupy those benches just the same as they do now, and the business of the country would go on in very much the same way—at any rate for a considerable time to come. I think, therefore, there need be no fear on that ground. As I have said, the measure has in it a considerable amount of matter which is worthy of serious and very deep consideration; and I am prepared to follow the Bill to its Committee stages.

Mr. PIRANI.—I hope the division will be taken on this Bill to-night. I do not intend to waste much time in discussing its merits, but I cannot help expressing my regret that the matter has been treated, by the members of the Government especially, in the personal

Mr. Hogg

tone in which it has been dealt with this evening. I thought, Sir, that a question like this would be discussed not only irrespective of party, but irrespective of personal considerations altogether, and would not be taken as a measure aiming at the Government sitting upon those benches. I am sure, Sir, that the member from whom it has come, perhaps the most loyal Liberal member of the party who has ever sat in this House, and who has been a most consistent Liberal during the twenty years he has been in Parliament, shows it is not aimed at the Government on those benches. With regard to the question itself, I think anybody who studies the subject at all deeply will agree with me that it is time there was some alteration in the present system of party government. I do not say for a moment that the details of the Bill are at all perfect, or that they could not be improved upon; but I say the time has arrived when the people of this country, and their representatives in Parliament, should set their heads together to devise some better scheme of government than the one we have at present in existence. It is said that this is aimed at the abolition of party. It is nothing of the sort. While human beings are human beings you will always have differences of opinion, and while you have differences of opinion you will always have parties to support those different sets of opinions. Why, Sir, who were found opposing the Bill in this House? The leader of the Opposition and the leader of the Government combined together in saying that they disapproved of the system proposed in this Bill. That shows that men of all shades of opinion can differ and can agree as to the method under which they consider we should be governed. I say that the present system of government is subversive of a great deal of what is best in government by popular vote. Ministers are supported not because they do any good themselves, not because every action of theirs is the best, but because each is a member of a Government which we consider is the best that has been on those benches. Therefore we do not hastily condemn any particular Minister, because in doing so we should be accused of condemning the Government, and of destroying the Government we came here to support. That is a bad thing, and I think, if this measure is only in the direction of giving us freedom to condemn or support any action of a particular Minister, it would be a great improvement on the present system. I shall vote for the second reading of the Bill, but, as I said before, not that I approve of the whole of its details, but because I consider that the present system of party government is not the best, and is not entirely in the interests of the country.

Mr. MASSEY.—I fancy, from the remarks I have heard, that, whether honourable members intend to support the Bill or to oppose it, they are agreed upon one point—namely, that it contains a most important principle, and one that is worthy of our most serious consideration; and, during the last hour or two,

at all events, it has had our most serious consideration. We have had a very interesting debate. We have had the subject discussed by some of the best and some of the ablest debaters in the House, and I have no doubt that many of us have learned a great deal of the different systems of government. It seems to me, Sir, that, of those who have taken an interest in the public affairs of the country, a majority must have come to the conclusion that the present system of party government is very far from perfect, and that it is responsible for a great deal of unpleasantness, and for a great waste of the time of the country. So far as the waste of time is concerned, I have heard it stated that this Parliament is an improvement on what has obtained in years past, but I think honourable members will agree with me, after the waste of time this afternoon, that there is room for still further improvement. The most serious objection I have to the present system is that it opens the door to all sorts of abuse and corrupt practice—the possibility, for instance, of Ministers making arrangements with members that for their support they shall get large sums of money spent in the districts which they represent, or to which they belong, or perhaps that they shall get billets for themselves or their friends. Then, measures are not always considered on their merits. If this measure which we are considering at the present time had been introduced by the Government I have no doubt it would have been carried by a very large majority; but, being introduced by a private member, I do not think there is the slightest chance whatever of its becoming law. But I have no doubt that the honourable gentleman who introduced the Bill will be satisfied with having the subject ventilated, and with educating the public still a little further in the direction he favours. On the other hand, measures which are introduced by the Government are supported irrespective of whether they are right or wrong, simply because they are made what are called party questions. Then, Ministers themselves are appointed not because they are the best men available—as common-sense would lead us to believe should be the case—but simply because they are the leading men of the strongest party in the House. There are many other objections to the present system, but those objections have been mentioned by the honourable gentleman who introduced the Bill, the honourable member for Waitaki, and by other members who have supported him, and so I do not think I need refer to them; but I agree with them in thinking that the only remedy for the abuses which have been referred to is the adoption of something on the lines of the Swiss system, such as is contained in the present Bill. No doubt we should find drawbacks and imperfections in the present Bill and in the Swiss system, but those drawbacks and imperfections could be remedied; and I feel sure that either of them would be a great improvement upon the system which obtains now, as they would do away with the log-rolling that has been re-

ferred to to-night, and with legislation that will benefit one class at the expense of another, or one part of the colony at the expense of other parts: in fact, parties such as we understand them would cease to exist, the interest of party would give way to the good of the colony, and Ministers and members would work together for the general prosperity. I intend to support the Bill.

Mr. MORRISON.—Sir, I do not intend to detain the House very long, but I wish to make a few remarks with regard to the Bill that is before us. I have been rather amused at some of the arguments of some honourable gentlemen who have spoken this evening. In my opinion, if the acts of public men are to be considered, we shall find their acts pointing one way and their language another; and, for my part, I prefer to place reliance upon their acts rather than upon their words. I think, if we were to apply this rule to a large number of the gentlemen who have to-night given us what they call reasons against party government, or the present system of party government, and in support of the present measure before the House, we should find that they were not at all sincere in a great number of the remarks they have made this evening. Now, the honourable gentleman who introduced the measure—the honourable member for Waitaki—seemed to be very anxious to impress upon this House the strong necessity or desirability of making this change, and he pointed out—I do not know whether they were exactly his own ideas or not, but he pointed out, in the large number of extracts he gave us from a certain number of authorities, that the Executive to be selected under his Bill would be of a purer and better nature, and that every Minister would be at perfect liberty to bring down a Bill, and, in speaking to it, he would be able to do what may be termed “play off his own bat.” Now, I should like honourable members to try just to imagine the state of things we should have with six or seven Ministers on those benches selected from all parts of the House, representing different sections in the House, but not the opinion of the majority of the country, when each member could bring down any measure he might think fit, and submit it before this honourable House. What would be the result? That the House would become simply and purely a wrangling and debating club, and nothing whatever would result from its deliberations,—at least, nothing that could be of any service to the community or of any advantage to the country. Now, under the present system, what have we? We have a body of gentlemen who are elected by members who represent the various constituencies throughout the colony; and I may say I do not think the honourable gentleman was entirely fair in the position he laid down that we were dominated and controlled and coerced by one single man. That man, if he is Premier of the colony, is chosen by ourselves; it is we who have put him in that position.

An Hon. MEMBER.—No, no.

Mr. MORRISON.—I beg the honourable Mr. Massey

gentleman's pardon. I say that it is by our votes and by our voices that he is put there. It is because of our confidence in him, and our support, that he is sent for by the Governor to form a Government; and, if he does not possess the confidence of a majority of this House, how long does he hold that office? Is it not by our voices and our votes that the Ministers are put in their positions on those benches, and that they are kept there?

An Hon. MEMBER.—No.

Mr. MORRISON.—The honourable gentleman says “No,” but he would say anything if he will say “No” to that proposition. I say the proposition is perfectly correct, and I am surprised that his logic is not better than it appears to be from his denial of it. I say the Premier does not entirely choose his Executive, for, if the party get their backs up, and refuse to allow certain gentlemen to be his colleagues, what is the result? It is that he has to cast his eyes about and find other gentlemen who will be acceptable to the party to fill those positions. I do not think it will require any

12.30. great strain on the memory of many honourable members in this House to call to mind occasions when some have been appointed who were not retained because the party did not approve of them. I think that is within the history of politics in this colony. Of course I stand here as a party man pure and simple. I am a believer in party government; and when I look at the great service which party government has rendered to what may be termed the progressive movement all over the world, I glory in the fact of being a party man. We have had a large number of authorities quoted, from Herbert Spencer upwards; but a great many of these men are theoretical writers. They lay certain things down and write accordingly. But go down to practical politics, and ask what Disraeli, Gladstone, and other leaders of the day have thought on this question. We have had John Bright quoted as not believing in party government; but a stronger party man than John Bright never stood in England. Though John Bright had strong convictions on certain matters, and if you trespassed on his conscience he was somewhat inclined to feel indignant, and on occasions to fall back on his conscience,—and it is possible he may have used the argument that he was not in favour of party government because something was pressed upon the Cabinet which he did not agree with,—still, he was a strong party man. I may just state a common illustration to bring it home to yourselves. I say this: You can take twenty men out of any particular section of the community in the colony—I care not where you take them from; you can appoint them to any assembly, political or non-political, to any society or any organization of any description; I care not where you take them from or pick them. I say that in twelve months after they have been formed into that organization there are two distinct parties, because the moment friction occurs there are generally two strong men, and those two men meet and differ. Their strength of

character, and the very magnetism which is part of their nature, is the means of attracting certain weaker members; and then you have got two parties at once. You can extend it to any organization you choose. That is my experience, and I have had a little experience of men being banded together for certain purposes. I say that after they are organized, in twelve months' time you have got two parties formed on the clear and distinct lines of party government.

Sir R. STOUT.—It would be the same in Cabinet.

Mr. MORRISON.—It would be worse in Cabinet, because the men you wish to form into an Executive Council are antagonistic from the commencement. The Executive chosen under the present system start under different conditions. Friction may arise—that is understood; but, still, under our present system of party government there is an opportunity for the Executive being guided and controlled in a manner which is not possible under this new proposal. The result under the present system would be that if friction arose, and if one man differed from his colleagues, he would sink his own individual opinion. He might argue the point, and try to bring them round, but if they stood firm he would have to give way to the majority. I believe the great number of us are believers in majorities. Now, there is another point that the honourable member for Inangahua was very strong upon. I did not know whether he was going to follow the lines of other honourable members by ridiculing the present system; but when he talked about the tail wagging the dog I thought he was playing very low down in a discussion of this description. The honourable member for Inangahua advanced an argument with regard to the state of things existing in Switzerland to-day. I interjected at the time that we had no woman working in the coal-mines in either Scotland or England. If he was a careful reader of history he would not have committed himself.

Mr. O'REGAN.—They were during this century.

Mr. MORRISON.—I did not know he was speaking in the past tense; he did not lead me to believe so. We have heard a good deal about the high position Switzerland occupies from an educational point of view. The senior member for Wellington City laid a great deal of stress upon that particular point. Would it surprise the honourable gentleman to know that in Switzerland children do not get free primary education?

Sir R. STOUT.—They are educated.

Mr. MORRISON.—The honourable gentleman said that, from an educational point of view, they were fifty years ahead of us. I say the children here are receiving a free primary education, and that the children in Switzerland are not doing so. They have in Switzerland a law that children must attend school from the age of seven to fourteen.

Sir R. STOUT.—Six to fourteen.

Mr. MORRISON.—The community pays a portion of the expenses, and the remainder is

made up of contributions from each canton; and the children have to go to school from seven to fourteen. I am quoting from an authority on this subject; but the honourable gentleman disputes and denies any authority but himself.

Sir R. STOUT.—Six to fourteen.

Mr. MORRISON.—Of course the honourable gentleman seemed to lay a great deal of stress upon that. It stands to reason that, if primary education is not free in Switzerland, university education is not free there. They have no secondary education.

Sir R. STOUT.—They have.

Mr. MORRISON.—They have no secondary education as we understand it.

Sir R. STOUT.—Yes; secondary education, and high education too. They have four systems.

Mr. MORRISON.—There was one remark that fell from the honourable member for Palmerston North. He treated us to a very nice little lecture on the evils of party government, and he thought the existing state of things could be improved. I should like the honourable gentleman who criticized the existing system to provide a remedy. The only thing attempted in that way is this measure submitted by the honourable member for Waitaki, which is not a workable measure, and, if it became law to-morrow, would turn this Chamber into a pure wrangling-shop.

An Hon. MEMBER.—It is so already.

Mr. MORRISON.—No; I beg your pardon. That there are abuses existing under our present system I am free to admit; but the difficulty is, How are you going to remove these abuses? It is not by introducing a measure of this kind—not by running down party government; it is not by saying that this present Government wear hobnailed boots, and drive us into this lobby or that.

Sir R. STOUT.—I never said that.

Mr. MORRISON.—If some speakers did not exactly say that, their remarks tended in that direction. Now, I say there are evils perpetrated under party government; but how are you going to remove them? Bring down some workable measure that will be approved by the country. This measure was not made the subject of an election pledge in most of the electorates. I told the electors in my district that I was a party man, and if they did not like to elect me as a party man they could reject me. Until you bring forward something better I am going to stick to the old system; and, in my opinion, a large measure of the support this measure is receiving, and of the hostile criticism which party government is receiving at present, is simply and purely from disappointed politicians, who are clamouring for and prepared to try anything that will assist in placing them on those benches. That is all I have to say on the question.

Major STEWARD.—Sir, as the hour is late, and the House is tired, and as I am anxious to get a division on this Bill, though I have a large number of notes I shall not reply.

The House divided.

AYES, 21.

Bell	Lang	Steward
Buddo	Massey	Stout
Carroll	McGuire	Tanner
Crowther	McNab	Te Ao.
Earnshaw	Meredith	<i>Tellers.</i>
Graham	Saunders	O'Regan
Hall-Jones	Smith, G. J.	Pirani.
Heke		

NOES, 27.

Allen	Joyce	Parata
Cadman	Kelly, J. W.	Pere
Carncross	Kelly, W.	Reeves
Collins	Lawry	Seddon
Duncan	McKenzie, J.	Smith, E. M.
Flatman	McKenzie, R.	Willis.
Fraser	McLachlan	<i>Tellers.</i>
Guinness	Mills	McGowan
Harris	Montgomery	Morrison.
Houston		

PAIRS.

<i>For.</i>	<i>Against.</i>
Buick	Pinkerton
Button	Buchanan
Duthie	Mackintosh
Green	Millar
Maslin	Mackenzie, T.
Newman	Stevens
Russell, G. W.	Ward.

Majority against, 6.

Motion negatived.

Mr. ALLEN called Mr. Speaker's attention to the fact that there was an honourable member in the Chamber who had not voted. It was the Minister representing the Native race.

Mr. SPEAKER said, if it was the case that the honourable member for Waiapu (Mr. Carroll) was within the walls of the chamber at the time the division was taken, and had not voted, he would have to come to the table and vote.

Mr. CARROLL said he had not voted, having previously "paired" with another honourable member. He was about to go out when Mr. Speaker ordered the doors to be locked.

Mr. SPEAKER.—Mr. Carroll, did you hear the question put, and, if so, which way do you vote?

Mr. CARROLL said that he had heard the question put, but that, in the absence of the honourable gentleman who had paired with him, and whose pair was for the "Ayes," his own vote would have to be recorded for the "Ayes."

Mr. SPEAKER directed that Mr. Carroll's name should be added to the "Ayes."

The House adjourned at two minutes to one o'clock a.m.

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

Thursday, 23rd August, 1894.

Second Reading—Third Reading—Harbours Bill—Gaming Bill—Middle District of New Zealand University College Bill.

The Hon. the SPEAKER took the chair at half-past two o'clock.

PRAYERS.

SECOND READING.

Pohangina County Bill.

THIRD READING.

Companies' Accounts Audit Bill.

HARBOURS BILL.

On the motion of the Hon. Mr. OLIVER, it was resolved, That the Select Committee to which the Harbours Act Amendment Bill is referred shall consist of the following members: The Hon. Mr. McLean, the Hon. Mr. Bonar, the Hon. Mr. Shrimski, the Hon. Mr. Montgomery, the Hon. Mr. Stevens, the Hon. Mr. Richardson, the Hon. W. Downie Stewart, the Hon. Mr. MacGregor, and the mover.

GAMING BILL.

IN COMMITTEE.

New clause (7).—Powers of President of representative racing club, if elected.

The Committee divided on the question, "That this clause be a clause of the Bill."

AYES, 23.

Acland	Holmes	Pollen
Barnicoat	Jennings	Richardson
Bonar	Kelly	Stevens
Bowen	MacGregor	Stewart
Buckley	Montgomery	Walker, L.
Dignan	Oliver	Whitmore
Feldwick	Ormond	Williams.
Grace	Pharazyn	

NOES, 6.

Jenkinson	McLean	Shrimski
Kerr	Rigg	Wahawaha.

Majority for, 17.

Clause inserted.

New clause (8).—No money or prize in respect of races, &c., recoverable at law.

The Hon. Mr. FELDWICK moved, That the words "or other race, game, sport, or exercise" be struck out.

The Committee divided on the question, "That the words proposed to be omitted stand part of the clause."

AYES, 19.

Acland	Kelly	Ormond
Barnicoat	MacGregor	Pharazyn
Bonar	McCullough	Richardson
Bowen	McLean	Stevens
Buckley	Montgomery	Walker, L.
Dignan	Oliver	Whitmore.
Jennings		

NOES, 7.

Feldwick	Rigg	Stewart
Jenkinson	Shrimski	Wahawaha.
Kerr		

Majority for, 12.

Words retained.

Bill reported, with amendments.

MIDDLE DISTRICT OF NEW ZEALAND
UNIVERSITY COLLEGE BILL.

The Council divided on the question, "That the remaining orders of the day be suspended, in order to commit this Bill."

AYES, 18.

Acland	Feldwick	Pharazyn
Baillie	Holmes	Richardson
Bonar	MacGregor	Wahawaha
Bowen	McCullough	Walker, L.
Buckley	Oliver	Whitmore
Dignan	Ormond	Williams.

NOES, 9.

Barnicoat	Kelly	Rigg
Jenkinson	Kerr	Shrimski
Jennings	McLean	Swanson.

Majority for, 9.

Orders suspended.

On the question, *That this Bill be committed,*

The Hon. Mr. McLEAN said this was an old friend which had again come up to be dealt with by the Council. Some time ago a Bill such as this was brought before the House and was defeated. He did not know that the circumstances had altered much since that time, or in such a way as to induce one to support the Bill. The Bill had been brought forward in a manner which made it look a very harmless measure, because it contained no endowment. There were similar Bills, however, which had been brought before them in which there were no endowments provided for, but which turned out not to be harmless Bills. It appeared to him that what was wanted was to take from Taranaki, for the purposes of this Bill, endowments of land that had been set aside for other purposes. If such a measure as this was thought to be required for the City of Wellington, what support was to be given to the College when there was no support provided for it in the Bill? If they thought that a university was necessary they should bring in the whole scheme at once, and not bring it in in this tedious piecemeal manner. It seemed to him a good many people were university-mad; they wanted universities in every little town in New Zealand. Take, for instance, his own country—Scotland—a country celebrated for its educational institutions. How many universities or colleges were there there? Although the population there compared with that of New Zealand was enormous, the number of colleges was not in nearly so great a proportion; and here, with only six hundred thousand people, they wanted to have colleges everywhere throughout New Zealand, and the people were to be taxed to pay for these colleges, in which, he

ventured to say, if they took the number of people educated, the cost of educating them was something enormous.

The Hon. Sir P. A. BUCKLEY.—What about Otago?

The Hon. Mr. McLEAN.—Otago came forward and out of the land of her own province endowed her university. It was their own property; and, because Dunedin was the first to get a university, was that a reason to advance for granting a university to every place in New Zealand? He said it was a credit to the people of Otago that they had established a university there, and that university should be supported as against other universities that came later. Let them take, for instance, the country districts: what did it matter whether the youth coming from a country district went to Christchurch, Dunedin, or Wellington? He could probably live even cheaper in Christchurch or Dunedin; and if he came from Taranaki, or Napier, or Nelson it did not make much difference to him whether he went to Dunedin or to Wellington to be educated. If a college was established in Wellington it would be for the use of the inhabitants of Wellington. He held that the funds of the colony should not be wasted in creating colleges which would be simply for the use of one locality, just from a feeling of jealousy, when there were plenty of colleges established already. He was glad to see his honourable friend Mr. Reynolds had come in, because that honourable gentleman would have something to say about the matter; he had stood firmly forward to oppose the last Bill, and he presumed he would be of the same opinion with regard to this. He felt happy that he had been enabled to delay the Bill, in order that his honourable friend might say something with regard to it. He hoped, at any rate, they would be able to stop the passage of the Bill for the present at all events, so that they could give it that calm consideration that the country required should be given to it.

The Hon. Sir G. S. WHITMORE said the honourable gentleman reminded him of the old saying that "Facts are stubborn things," like donkeys; and it was a fact that the honourable gentleman, every time that any proposal was made for a university college in New Zealand in a place outside Otago, uniformly opposed it with great obstinacy, and with some success on one or two occasions. He did not think the honourable gentleman should accuse other places of jealousy when he had shown that feeling himself so strongly. He told them, in the most naïf manner, that this proposal might injure Otago, as it would be likely to take away a certain number of students from that place. Of course every one could not have a university college at his door; but to say that on that account a very large district was to be put to the expense and inconvenience of sending their youths a very long way off—to Christchurch and Dunedin for instance—was, he thought, no argument at all. He supposed he should not be agreed with by the Hon. Mr. Reynolds or the Hon. Mr.

McLean when he said that the Province of Otago had got its endowments for a university by robbing the rest of the colony of a quantity of Crown lands; but the Hon. Mr. McLean seemed to take great credit for having done it. For his part, he could not see what credit there was. The land did not belong to them in the least, although they took it, and at a time when they thought the colony was very shortly going to claim its own. He said nothing with regard to those voluntary endowments by people who had put their hands in their own pockets for them, but the people of Otago had put their hands firmly in the pockets of the colony, and took a certain amount of Crown lands that did not belong to them, so as to prevent the rest of the colony from getting its rights. It was a very great blot in this Bill that endowments were not provided for; but, as the Hon. Mr. Bowen had explained, the Bill was brought in by a private individual, who could not provide for endowments; but he hoped that the public would considerably assist in the future, and that the university college might be made self-supporting. With regard to the jealousy which the honourable gentleman said was felt against Dunedin, that seemed to have reciprocally animated him when he opposed a university college for the surrounding district about Cook Strait. Formerly these settlements were called the Cook's Strait settlements, and he thought they should be so still. If the honourable gentleman wanted a reason why a university college should be provided for in Wellington, he could give him one. Dunedin, at the time when they had established their university, was called "the premier city," because of its goldfields, and owing to its trade with Melbourne. Unfortunately, this colony had as yet no metropolitan centre, as they had in Victoria and New South Wales; the trade was pretty equally divided among the four chief cities: but Dunedin, so far from growing since that time, had gone back, whereas Wellington had made a most marvellous spring during the last few years, and the want of a university college had become very pressing. There were a large number of the educated youth who now desired to press on with their studies, and, although every person with moderate means would not be able to send his children down to Wellington, still there were a large number of persons in Wellington and the suburbs who would be able to take advantage of a college if established here. He thought the time had come when the Cook Strait settlements ought to have a university, and for that reason he would support the Bill. It would have been better if the Hon. Mr. McLean had raised his objections in Committee.

The Hon. Mr. REYNOLDS had had no intention of saying one word on this Bill, and would not have risen but for the remarks which had fallen from the Hon. Sir George Whitmore. That honourable gentleman stated that Otago had robbed the colony. Otago had made the colony. Why, if it had not been for the revenue derived from Otago in 1863 the colony

would have been bankrupt. How had Otago robbed the colony?

An Hon. MEMBER.—Of its land.

The Hon. Mr. REYNOLDS said the land belonged to Otago, according to the compact of 1856. Other provincial districts had dealt with the land as they thought proper. They gave it away in some instances, and in other instances they sold it at 5s. an acre. Otago sold it for £2 an acre. Then, the honourable gentleman stated that Dunedin was once the premier city of the colony. He considered that it was the premier city still, notwithstanding everything that had been done by the Colonial Government to injure Otago, and it would hold its own, they might rest assured. It was not going to be sat upon.

The Hon. Sir P. A. BUCKLEY rose to a point of order. The honourable gentleman had stated that the Colonial Government had done everything it could to ruin Otago. Such an assertion as that could not be allowed to pass without remark. If any wrong had been done by the Colonial Government it must have been when his honourable friend represented the Government in that Chamber.

The Hon. Mr. REYNOLDS would repeat that everything had been done to injure Otago. Why, even Otago prisoners had been removed to Wellington in order to get them to make bricks so as to give the Government an opportunity of erecting any number of buildings in Wellington. He should certainly call for a return of what amount had been expended during the last ten years on buildings in Wellington as compared with the expenditure in other parts of the colony. He knew a very large sum had been expended in alterations to the Parliament Buildings just before Parliament met—about £7,000, he was given to understand—and, to his mind, it was criminal to spend £7,000 of the people's money for such a purpose.

The Hon. the SPEAKER said the honourable gentleman was travelling beyond the question.

The Hon. Mr. REYNOLDS was endeavouring to point out that it was not advisable to go to this expenditure at the present time, and he was endeavouring to show that the expenditure in the City of Wellington hitherto had been excessive and not at all justifiable. He held that, in the present state of the colony's finances, they were not justified in going to further expense in establishing more colleges or universities.

The Hon. Mr. KELLY sympathized entirely with higher education, but he was very much in doubt as to the intention of the Bill. Of course the Bill presented to the Council was merely the framework. There were no endowments or revenue provided, and the reason given for that was that it was brought in by a private member, and endowments could be included at some future time. He had brought in Bills over and over again, with the consent of the Crown, for special purposes; and he thought that the honourable gentleman, if he obtained the consent of the Crown, could

Hon. Sir G. S. Whitmore

have provided for the endowments in his Bill. If he were satisfied that it was not the intention, at some future time, to take endowments outside the District of Wellington, the Bill would have his hearty support. But he had good reason for suspecting that this Bill meant to take endowments outside the Wellington Provincial District. Unless the honourable member who introduced the Bill assured him that such was not the intention he should be obliged, when the Bill went into Committee, to move a clause to this effect: "No reserves the revenues of which have been set aside by 'The Universities Act, 1874' for the promotion of higher education within the Provincial District of Taranaki shall be taken for the purposes of this Act." On a former occasion a provision was included in the Bill to take endowments in the Taranaki district, and he feared a similar intention to take endowments from Taranaki for the purpose of carrying on the institution proposed in this Bill.

The Hon. Mr. SHRIMSKI moved, *That the debate be adjourned.*

The Hon. Mr. PHARAZYN supported the motion for adjournment because there was a certain amount of misunderstanding as to the nature of the Bill. Some of the speakers appeared to think it was a money Bill, or that it contained provision for the appropriation of a considerable amount of money or land; whereas in fact it was only a machinery Bill. As to the fears expressed by the Hon. Mr. Kelly, they were merely imaginary; although he would be quite prepared to accept the amendment the honourable gentleman had indicated that he would move in Committee, if it would assure the honourable gentleman that no endowments would be taken from the Taranaki District.

Debate adjourned.

The Council adjourned at half-past four o'clock p.m.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.

Thursday, 23rd August, 1894.

Third Reading—Taranaki Courthouses—W. Williams—New Zealand Government Agency for Advances Bill—Duntroon—Livingstone Telephone—J. R. Clement—Dairy Expert—Otara—Six-Mile Creek Roadwork—Rotorua Sanatorium Charges—Miller's Flat Punt—Mangere Cemetery Trust Board—North of Auckland Unemployed—Ruauu Block—Licenses—Adulterated Cream of Tarrar, &c.—Inglewood-Tarata Road—Rating of Native Land—Abattoirs Committee—Riverton Harbour Board Empowering Bill—Factories Bill—Shipping and Seamen's Bill.

Mr. SPEAKER took the chair at half-past two o'clock p.m.

PRAYERS.

THIRD READING.

Married Women's Property Bill.

TARANAKI COURTHOUSES.

On the motion of Mr. MCGUIRE, it was ordered, That a return be laid before this House of the amount of Court business done at the following Courthouses—namely, New Plymouth, Stratford, and Hawera—during the past three years to the 30th June last, giving a separate return of the work done at each Courthouse annually.

W. WILLIAMS.

On the motion of Mr. PIRANI, it was ordered, That any letter or document received from Mr. William Williams, of Patea, in regard to Judge Kettle's report on the Kaitangi-whenua purchase be laid on the table.

NEW ZEALAND GOVERNMENT AGENCY FOR ADVANCES BILL.

Major STEWARD asked the Minister of Agriculture, Whether provision will be made under the New Zealand Government Agency for Advances Bill enabling the granting to village settlers of advances upon the value of their improvements, and, if so, to what proportion of the value of such improvements? He was understood to say that he understood the Government were going to submit to the House such a Bill as was referred to in the question, and he could suggest no better direction in which to lay out the money than in connection with the village settlements. He had a letter from a village settler, who said he was paying a higher rent than he could afford, owing to the price of produce having fallen so low. He hoped the Minister—who, he knew, took a keen interest in the advancement of village settlers—would provide for advances to them on the value of their improvements.

Mr. WARD said the matter was under the consideration of the Government. There was no provision in the Bill to which the honourable gentleman alluded to deal with the matter. If it was to be dealt with at all it would have to be done in a separate Bill. The Bill alluded to would be a comprehensive Bill, dealing with the raising of the money and the way in which it was to be expended; and matters such as the advancing on improvements, *et cetera*, would not be mentioned in it, for obvious reasons. However, the Government were in favour of such a provision, and the matter was under consideration.

DUNTROON-LIVINGSTONE TELEPHONE.

Major STEWARD asked the Commissioner of Telegraphs, Whether he will make provision for the construction of a telephone-line between Duntroon and Livingstone; and, if so, on what terms? This question had relation to the convenience of the public residing in the extreme portion of his district—that was, between Duntroon and Livingstone, and even beyond that for a distance of twenty, thirty, or forty miles. The Minister of Lands had cut up and offered for settlement a large area of land in that district. The people settled there could not communicate with other parts

except by sending down to Duntroon, which might be a distance of from twenty to forty miles. There were circumstances under which it was exceedingly desirable to be able to communicate immediately with other districts. Last year he asked the Government if they would provide communication, and the Minister said he would do so under certain conditions which he then named. He (Major Steward) did his best to fulfil those conditions. It was stipulated that there should be a sum of £100 contributed by the residents of the district. He himself personally offered to contribute a good share of that sum, but they had not been able to raise the amount required by the Government.

Mr. WARD said he had made inquiries into this matter at the request of the honourable gentleman, and he found that every allowance had been made for cheap material that could be secured for the construction of such a line, including the use of second-hand rails, and it was found that the working of the line on the lowest estimate upon the cost of construction would amount to £48 10s. per annum. That being so, there were other places in the colony requiring similar lines, and he was afraid he would have to adhere to the system he mentioned last year, owing to the want of funds to enable the Government to carry out the numerous requests for such works.

J. R. CLEMENT.

Major STEWARD asked the Minister of Lands, Whether the Government will take immediate action to give effect to the recommendation of the Waste Lands Committee upon Petition No. 341, signed by 108 residents of Waimate, praying that the grievance of one J. R. Clement may be redressed? This question related to a very singular case, which he had had charge of for the last fourteen years. The position was this: The petitioner complained that he took up a number of years ago an area of 315 acres of land from the Crown. An Act was passed some years after that providing that any person who had no access to his land had a right to call on the Crown to provide access. Curiously enough, although the petition had come to this House time after time, the petitioner was still without access to his land, and that arose in this way: The surveyor to whom the question was referred, acting not under the present Government, but a previous Government, offered the petitioner an access to his land, but only through a gully of some hundreds of feet in depth. Petitioner now came to the House and contended that the access was not at all reasonable. The following was the report of the Waste Lands Committee:—

“The Waste Lands Committee is of opinion that this petition should be referred to the Government, as the petition and evidence disclose a peculiar state of circumstances. The facts are as follow:—

“Mr. J. R. Clement applied for 315 acres of land in Canterbury in 1877. In consequence of a mistake in the map, the land allotted was some considerable distance west of that applied

for. No road to it was granted, giving any access to the land.

“In 1886, as no road had been granted, though the same had been promised by the Under-Secretary for Public Works by letter,—21st July, 1886,—Mr. Clement, sooner than pay property-tax for land he could not occupy, conveyed the land to the Queen.

“There does not seem to have been any acceptance of the land by the Government, though no property- or land-tax has been paid since the conveyance. Nothing has been done as to providing a road.

“The department offer to provide a road along Stoney Creek, but the petitioner says this road will be useless for traffic.

“The case is one that in the unanimous opinion of the Committee calls for immediate action; and they suggest that the Lands Department should communicate with the County Council, and get the county engineer to suggest a practicable road; and, if the expense is not too great, the Government should take steps to provide the road recommended by the county engineer.”

He trusted, considering the length of time this matter had remained undecided, that the Government would take some action without further delay.

Mr. J. MCKENZIE said the report referred to was only received by the Lands Department on the previous day. However, the department was well versed in the question referred to. The subject had been investigated over and over again by the Government and also by Committees of the House, and the circumstances were well-known. The Government were of opinion that the local body should provide a road for this section, and that it was their duty to do so. However, the Government were quite prepared to ask the local body to send their engineer there, and, if some small assistance from the Government would be sufficient to settle this long dispute, they would be prepared to grant it, but the Government was not going to provide an enormous sum of money for the purpose.

DAIRY EXPERT.

Mr. COLLINS asked the Government, Are they aware that Mr. Charles R. Valentine, Produce Commissioner, representing this colony in England, has entered into an engagement to represent New South Wales in a similar capacity; and whether, under the circumstances, full justice is likely to be done to the dairy products of this colony so far as English markets are concerned? He believed that a question closely allied to this one had previously been asked in the House. The question was based upon a rumour that Mr. Valentine had received a commission to act for the New South Wales Government. He would read the following paragraph, which appeared in the *London Grocers' Gazette* of the 30th June last: “The New South Wales Government has appointed Mr. Charles R. Valentine, the Produce Commissioner of the New Zealand Government, to represent the colony in England in

Major Steward

a similar capacity." If that paragraph was correct, he conceived that this country, so far as dairy produce was concerned, was in serious jeopardy. It would be totally unfair that our dairy products should be placed in the hands of a Commissioner who was at the same time acting for a powerful rival. He thought the country would demand to know whether there was any foundation for the statement. If it was true, he thought the Government and the country would equally demand that this officer, if he were acting for the New South Wales Government, should cease to act in a similar capacity for the New Zealand Government.

Mr. J. MCKENZIE thought it was a very great pity indeed that honourable members should believe newspaper rumour. There was no truth in the paragraph quoted by the honourable gentleman, and it was a pity that honourable gentlemen should be ready to believe what appeared in newspapers, whether the statements were true or false.

Hon. MEMBERS.—Oh!

Mr. J. MCKENZIE said, Yes; that was the fact. If he had to attend to and reply to all the misstatements which he saw in the Press of the colony he would be doing nothing else from eight o'clock in the morning till twelve o'clock at night.

Mr. SPEAKER must observe that the honourable gentleman was now introducing argumentative matter, which was contrary to the rules of the House.

Mr. J. MCKENZIE said, with regard to the question at issue, he might inform the honourable gentleman and the House that there was no foundation for the statement. Mr. Valentine was sent Home to endeavour to find a market for our produce. He received instructions at the same time to endeavour, as far as possible, to co-operate with the officers of other countries, but in no way to allow the interests of New Zealand to be injured by any such co-operation. He might also say that the Agent-General had been advised that Mr. Valentine had been sent Home for that purpose, and Mr. Valentine was an officer under the supervision of the Agent-General in London. He could only repeat that there was no foundation for the statement which had been made.

OTAGO-SIX-MILE CREEK ROADWORK.

Mr. McNAB asked the Minister of Lands, Whether there is any truth in the statement appearing in the columns of some of the Otago papers that on the road from Otago to the Six-mile Creek the prices set down for the various classes of work are so low that only 3s. per day is the average wage, and out of that provision has to be made for the supply of tools? He had been induced to put this question on the Paper from letters which he had observed recently in some of the southern papers. Not only had there been letters to the Press, but the matter had been taken up by the regular correspondents of the newspapers, and a colonial statesman had recently made similar statements on the public platform. Just as he was going to rise to ask this question a letter bear-

ing upon this matter was put into his hand by an honourable gentleman. He would read the letter, as it voiced to a considerable extent the remarks which had been made in the Press. He would omit from the letter all reference to individual names, and the charges made against particular persons. The following was an extract from the letter:—

"SIR,—I respectfully beg to call your immediate attention to the situation of the men working on the Otago-Waikawa Road. The men are being treated in a shameful manner. . . . I, knowing the number of hard-working men who are at the utmost only earning 3s. 4d. per day, beg of you and your party to help us through. A more unjust or gross piece of sweating has never been heard of in any part of New Zealand. The 'unemployed' are actually expected to buy second-hand wheelbarrows at the top price, besides all tools, and the prices for the work are simply scandalous. Men are not earning 'tucker.'"

Mr. J. MCKENZIE said this was a question exactly on all fours with the one he had just answered. He had not seen the newspaper correspondence referred to by the honourable gentleman, but since the question had appeared on the Order Paper he had had inquiries made with regard to this work. It was a new work, and no official report had yet been received from the officers in charge of it; but he was advised by the department in the part of the colony referred to that the rates were similar to those of last year, and ranged from the minimum, 4s. 4d., to a maximum of 9s. 2d., or an average of 6s. 9d., as stated in the Lands and Survey Report of the present year. The average for Southland was 6s. 7½d., where work was done practically at equal rates and under the supervision of the same officers.

ROTORUA SANATORIUM CHARGES.

Mr. MEREDITH asked the Minister of Lands, Is it correct that members of friendly societies and labour and trades unions visiting, for curative treatment, the Government sanatorium, Rotorua, are treated as a privileged class by a system of differential charges, while a much higher scale of charges is made on the general public visiting the sanatorium for curative treatment; and, if so, why? He asked this question in consequence of a communication which he had received from one of his constituents, who complained of the system of differential charges, and desired that the matter should be brought under the notice of the Government. He would read a line or two from the communication:—

"I have lately returned from a visit of a few weeks to Rotorua, and I desire to bring under your notice a fact connected with the Government sanatorium at that place, which deserves your making inquiry from the Government why members of friendly societies are admitted to the sanatorium at £1 1s. per week, while non-members are charged £1 10s. per week."

3.0. It appeared that the one class received the same treatment as the others, sat at the same tables with them,

had the same refreshment, and had to pay £1 10s., while the other parties were only charged £1 1s.

Mr. REEVES said it was correct, not that members of trades-unions were admitted at a preferential charge, but that members of duly-registered friendly societies were. They were admitted on the same terms as were persons recommended by Charitable Aid Boards. Before June, 1892, this preferential rate was only accepted in the case of persons recommended by Charitable Aid Boards, but in 1892 a petition was sent to him through Mr. Buick, M.H.R., in which members of friendly societies pointed out that it was hardly fair that they should be obliged to apply through a Charitable Aid Board before getting at the lower rate. Consequently he had a regulation gazetted under which members of duly-qualified friendly societies, if the societies paid their fare to and from Rotorua and provided them with a proper supply of clothing, and if their cases were certified to as being fit for treatment, and likely to be benefited there, might be admitted at £1 1s. per week, in the same way as persons recommended by Charitable Aid Boards, to the number of three persons at any one time, and only then when there was room which was not occupied by other persons.

MILLER'S FLAT PUNT.

Mr. LARNACH asked the Government, Whether they are aware that a return was presented to the Tuaepeka County Council on the 10th instant by Mr. Edie, the puntman at Miller's Flat, showing that during the winter month of July last 6,746 passengers, 2,044 horses, 897 vehicles, 247 sheep, and 76 head of cattle were carried across the River Molyneux at Miller's Flat by the small punt, the only means of crossing which the large community of settlers have; and would the Government take the importance of the matter into their serious consideration, with the view of improving that primitive condition of things? He put this question to impress upon the Government the necessity for arranging for additional conveniences to that large section of hard-working settlers of the community which now existed at that place. He therefore hoped that the Government would see it to be prudent to make some alteration as soon as possible, so as to give greater facilities to the inhabitants there.

Mr. J. McKENZIE said that no information had been received by the Lands Department up to the present time in connection with this matter, but he had no doubt the particulars given by the honourable gentleman in the question were quite correct, and the matter was one that would be considered when Government was preparing the public-works estimates.

MANGARE CEMETERY TRUST BOARD.

Mr. MITCHELSON asked the Minister of Lands, If he will take the necessary steps to provide that the residents in the Borough of Onchunga shall have proper and fair repre-

sentation upon the Mangare Cemetery Trust Board?

Mr. J. McKENZIE was informed that the present trustees for the management of the Mangare Cemetery were appointed in 1890, and that no application had been received from the residents that they should have any other representation than that existing at the present time. According to the Cemeteries Act, the Government had power to appoint to or remove from the Board of Trustees, and, if it was considered that the Borough of Onchunga was not properly represented on this Trust Board, new members could be added to it, or some of the old members removed and their places filled, if sufficient cause were shown. The honourable gentleman might get the local people to inform the Government as to their wishes, and they would be attended to.

NORTH OF AUCKLAND UNEMPLOYED.

Mr. THOMPSON asked the Government, What steps, if any, are being taken to find work for the unemployed in the North of Auckland? He had been induced to put the question on the Order Paper through having received a number of letters and telegrams from the north of Auckland. A large amount of distress existed there amongst the working-people. Owing to the collapse of the gum trade, all credit had been practically stopped by the storekeepers and others to the working-men. If they had no cash to pay for their supplies they had to go without. The whole system of credit which existed previously, by which men were assisted over dull times, had been discontinued, and the result, as far as his information went, was that a large number of men were really in distress. He would remind the Government that he was not in the habit of bringing matters like this before the House, neither were the working-men in that part of the country in the habit of agitating for work. Were he not satisfied that an amount of distress really existed he would not have brought the question before the House. He hoped the Government would be able to inform the House that they had made some provision to meet some of the worst cases in the district.

Mr. REEVES said they had made provision to meet the worst cases that had been brought before them in that district by putting the gum-diggers on the railway and on roads in connection with settlement. Since they had done this they had received no more complaints; but if the honourable gentleman would pass to him the letters and telegrams he had referred to he would be glad to have them.

Mr. THOMPSON said he had already handed them to the Premier.

RUANUI BLOCK.

Mr. WILLIS asked the Minister of Lands, Whether the restrictions on the alienation of the Ruanui Block have been, or are intended to be, removed; and whether he is aware that a lease of that block, negotiated by Mr. Studholme, would, on the withdrawal of the re-

Mr. Meredith

strictions, have effect given to it? For some time they had had rumours in his district concerning this Ruanui Block. It was said that Mr. Studholme always seemed to have large influences at his back, and, when any difficulties were to be removed, seemed always able to get the restrictions removed from the Native lands. It was well known—at least, it was understood—that there were restrictions over the Ruanui Block, but that these restrictions had been removed, and that Mr. Studholme was to enter, if he had not already entered, into arrangements for a further lease of the Ruanui Block. He thought it was important that this question should be answered. The Government, of course, was taking all possible steps in the way of opening up land for settlement purposes. This Ruanui Block was a very extensive one; he had been all over it, and he knew what a valuable one it was. If this land were cut up for settlement purposes it would be the means of establishing a large number of settlers on the land, and would be very serviceable for settlement purposes.

Mr. J. MCKENZIE said the department had no official information with regard to the subject referred to in the question, but he had given instructions to have full inquiry made into the matter, and would take care that nothing was done that would prevent the colony realising the full benefit of any restrictions that had been placed upon this block. As soon as he received information on the subject he would act accordingly.

LICENSES.

Mr. McGUIRE asked the Government, If they will give information as to who is the proper officer to issue licenses and who should receive the licensing-fees under the Alcoholic Liquors Sale Control Act?

Mr. CADMAN said the Government had always steadily declined to interpret statutes for local bodies, because if the Government were to commence to deal with the points raised by various local bodies in the colony they would want probably four Solicitor-Generals and six or more Crown Law Officers. But there was a doubt on this question, and it was intended to put the question beyond doubt in the new Act.

ADULTERATED CREAM OF TARTAR, ETC.

Mr. EARNSHAW asked the Minister of Justice, If his attention has been called to the late prosecutions in Dunedin in regard to the sale of cream of tartar, mustard, &c., alleged to have been adulterated; and, if not, will he make inquiries into the same, and the equity of the different punishments meted out to the persons charged with such sales? There had been a number of convictions in Dunedin under the Adulteration Act, and he would like to bring under notice samples of the cases, as reported in the *Otago Daily Times* and in the *Evening Star*. He submitted that the retailers of the mustard were not trying to evade the Adulteration Act, but were selling what was an

ordinary article of commerce, and it was really admitted throughout the whole case that there was no desire on the part of those who sold the articles to evade the law, or to defraud. That being so, he thought it would have been better had the Inspector who took the case into Court simply taken it as a test, without any penalties being enforced. He trusted that the Minister would look into the matter, and see whether, under such circumstances, these persons, who had been fined for selling an ordinary commercial article, and who had not been intentionally breaking the law, should not have their penalties remitted. Especially in the case in Cargill Road, where a dealer had been sent to prison to herd with common felons for doing what was ordinarily done in the trade, the penalty seemed to him most severe and uncalled-for. He thought the penalties were very severe, and he trusted the Minister would make full inquiry into the matter, and make such reparation as he might deem fit.

Mr. CADMAN said that nothing official had been heard by the department in this matter, but since the question had appeared on the Order Paper he had sent to the Magistrate to make full inquiry into the matter.

INGLEWOOD-TARATA ROAD.

Mr. McGUIRE asked the Government, Whether they will have the Junction Road from Inglewood to Tarata put in such a state of repair as to be suitable for wheel-traffic, as that portion of the road known as the Zigzag is in a very dangerous state? This was a very important question. This road from Inglewood to Tarata was the outlet for a large number of Government settlers. It was also the natural outlet for the whole of the Tanner and Milsop special settlers. The state of the roads was very bad, as might be seen from the following paragraph:—

“Recently the mailman was riding from Inglewood to Tarata, and when crossing the Zigzag the horse floundered into a mudhole nearly up to the neck, and stuck fast. The mailman managed to jump off in time, and saved the mail, but he had to let the horse die in the mudhole, as it was impossible to save it. Parliament voted money last year for making this road, but the money was not spent. It is useless for the Government to talk about settling people on the land when arterial roads are left in the disgraceful state that the Junction Road is now in.”

He trusted that a substantial sum would be placed upon the estimates for this work.

Mr. J. MCKENZIE said the road referred to by the honourable member was one which at the present time was under the control of the local authority. It was originally formed by funds provided by the Government, and then handed over to the local body. The local body had neglected to do anything further to it. They also neglected to maintain it, and consequently it had got into a bad state of repair. When the Government made a road the least that a local body could do would be to keep it in repair. He was not sure that he could make

any promise to grant any subsidy for this road, seeing that the Government had already spent a large sum upon it.

RATING OF NATIVE LAND.

Mr. MCGUIRE asked the Government, If they will answer the following question: Where part of a section of Native land is over five miles from a public road, should the whole section be rated, or the part within the five miles?

Mr. CARROLL said the department advised that the Act was perfectly clear on this point. All Native land beyond the five-mile limit was exempt, and therefore could not be rated whether it was in the same section or not.

ABATTOIRS COMMITTEE.

Mr. DUNCAN moved, That the Abattoirs Committee have leave to sit on Friday, the 24th August, during the sitting of the House.

Mr. BELL.—Why?

Mr. DUNCAN said the reason was that the Colonial Treasurer would be occupied all the morning, and so would he (Mr. Duncan), on the Tariff Committee. It was necessary the Treasurer should be present at the Abattoirs Committee, as he was in charge of the Bill, in order to get it through Committee, so that the Bill might have a chance of passing this year. There was, therefore, an urgent necessity for the Committee to sit next day during the sitting of the House.

Mr. BELL said, as a member of the Committee, he opposed sitting next day, though he was not opposed to any day next week the honourable gentleman wished to name.

Mr. DUNCAN believed it would take all next week for the Tariff Committee to get through.

Mr. BELL said this was a matter he took great interest in, and he should not like to be absent from the Committee the following afternoon.

The House divided.

AYES, 33.

Buddo	Joyce	Morrison
Buick	Kelly, W.	Parata
Cadman	Larnach	Pinkerton
Carncross	Lawry	Russell, G. W.
Carroll	Mackintosh	Smith, E. M.
Earnshaw	McGowan	Stevens
Flatman	McKenzie, J.	Thompson
Graham	McKenzie, R.	Ward.
Hall	McLachlan	<i>Tellers.</i>
Harris	McNab	Duncan
Hogg	Mills	Kelly, J. W.
Houston		

NOES, 24.

Allen	Mackenzie, T.	Smith, G. J.
Button	Maslin	Stout
Collins	Massey	Tanner
Crowther	McGuire	Te Ao
Fraser	Mitchelson	Willis.
Green	O'Regan	<i>Tellers.</i>
Guinness	Pirani	Bell
Hutchison, W.	Russell, W. R.	Newman.
Lang		

Majority for, 9.

Motion agreed to.

Mr. J. McKensie

RIVERTON HARBOUR BOARD EMPOWERING BILL.

Mr. MACKINTOSH said that, as he had not addressed the House and explained the measure on its second reading, he now proposed to explain to the fullest extent what the provisions of this Bill were, and the circumstances that had led to its introduction. Some years ago the Government handed over to the Borough of Riverton the control of the Riverton Harbour. The borough, not having sufficient means to carry out the necessary works in order to put that harbour in a proper condition, came to the conclusion that it would be advisable either to seek the assistance of Parliament, or to induce a syndicate to advance the money necessary to carry out the work.

3.30. Hence this measure which he had in his hand—the Riverton Harbour Board Empowering Bill. The Borough Council of Riverton was the Harbour Board, and this measure set forth the terms upon which the harbour, and its endowments, and its revenues would be leased for a term of fifty years. There was provision also in this measure that, in the event of being successful in that respect, then, when the proper plans and specifications intended for the work were completed, and the agreement was ready for signature, a vote of the residents within the borough would be taken, and again the matter would have to be brought before Parliament, and a special Act would require to be passed to confirm this agreement. So that this measure was simply a preliminary measure to enable the Borough Council to deal with a syndicate, and, if they were successful in doing that, then the whole matter would have to be again submitted to the House. There was nothing dangerous whatever in the measure. It simply gave the liberty to treat with a syndicate; and, as for the works proposed, of course he was not in possession of elaborate plans and specifications, and so on, because it would be nonsense to make elaborate plans of the work until they had a syndicate prepared to advance the money. Owing to the waste of money by other Harbour Boards in other portions of the colony it was not deemed desirable that they should approach the House for borrowing-powers. Therefore they did not ask for borrowing-powers; neither did they ask for rating-powers. It was true that the Bluff Harbour Board had borrowing-powers, also rating-powers, over a large area of Southland, but it had never attempted to put them in force. The Board had never for one moment attempted to put them in force, and for the simple reason that if they were to attempt to do it the people of Southland would not have it. They had a large endowment, and a capital revenue arising from port dues; therefore, as far as the Bluff Harbour was concerned, they were independent of calling upon the people to pay rates. They did not ask for rating-powers beyond the borough; but the borough was responsible for the action of the Council in every way. Consequently, he wished distinctly to explain that they had no

ulterior motives, nor anything at all concealed. This was quite a simple matter. He believed there had been somewhere else in this colony something of the same kind where Parliament had not been asked to assist, and where the money had been advanced by a syndicate. A good deal of capital had been made by one speaker in Committee in reference to a report and certain plans prepared by Mr. Reynolds. Some two years ago he submitted these plans to the Committee, and these plans were in the possession of an officer connected with the Local Bills Committee, but in some manner these plans had disappeared, how he could not say, but this honourable gentleman to whom he referred persisted that it was very necessary that these plans should be found, and also Mr. Reynolds's report. How they disappeared he could not tell. He sent for them from Southland when Parliament was not in session, but they could not be got; and after Parliament was in session he several times endeavoured to find Mr. Reynolds's report and plans, but they could not be found. However, he could assure the House it was of very little consequence, because it would be plainly seen that until they had a syndicate prepared to advance the money it was useless to make plans. Of course, the plans prepared by Mr. Reynolds were complete plans of what the harbour would be in the future. Many practical men had said that it would be an easy matter to provide the required shelter and wharf-accommodation by extending the reef for a certain distance, and by erecting a wharf in the lee of it, at which a considerable number of vessels would be accommodated for a very moderate expense. However, on the present occasion the amount of the expense did not matter, because, as he had said before, that would be settled when they found the people who were prepared to advance the money. There were some gentlemen who had very great confidence in the future of the Riverton district. Westward of it lay a large tract of country recently settled; and extending all the way from Orepuki to Preservation Inlet there was a large tract of country, rough at present, but which would maintain a large population in the future, and if they had a good harbour at Riverton it would be of great importance to that district. The Bluff Harbour at the present moment did a very fair trade—quite enough for the accommodation the Harbour Board provided. The people of Riverton did not wish to take away this trade from the Bluff, but to provide for the future. They did not look forward to the first works being of great magnitude—it would not be necessary; but as trade increased the works would be increased also; and, instead of having to travel with their produce forty miles to the Bluff, the farmers of the western district could ship their produce at Riverton Harbour, and thereby effect a great saving in railway carriage. It was true nothing had been done to this harbour, because the early settlers, or, rather, the early storekeepers, were so short-sighted and selfish that they wanted all vessels to

come up the river to their doors. This magnificent harbour was well known sixty years ago to the whalers and the early pioneers of this colony. There were four safe and commodious harbours known in the colony sixty years ago, and these were Auckland, Wellington, Lyttelton, and Riverton. Riverton Harbour had sufficient depth of water to suit the largest merchant vessel afloat at any hour of the day or night; tide in or tide out there was sufficient depth of water; and the intercolonial steamers, in their course from the Solander to the Bluff, would have to turn out of that course but a very few miles to drop in to Howell's Point, land passengers and mails, and proceed on their journey again with perfect safety night or day. With a good electric light steamers could drop in there at any hour whatever. Now, it was a notorious fact that they had not in the South at the present moment a harbour that these vessels could come into with safety. They would not even load to their full loading at any harbour they had in the South; whereas, if they had a harbour at Howell's Point, the largest vessel afloat could drop in there with perfect safety, and Riverton could be made the first port of arrival and the last port of departure in the colony. It was not a mere local matter, although taken up by Riverton; and, although the Riverton people looked upon this measure as peculiarly valuable to them, he maintained it was to provide a port for Southland, because the grain went to Invercargill, which was the centre of all the railways there, and, instead of all the grain going to the Bluff, it could be sent to Howell's Point quite as cheaply as to the Bluff. In fact, this Bill would give Invercargill two strings to its bow—that was to say, two ports. But by far the better string of the two would be that of Riverton, because, after passengers had been landed at Riverton, they would travel through a magnificent country, which would give them a favourable impression of the colony; whereas, when they landed at the Bluff, he regretted to say, it was not so—in fact, the aspect of the country repelled them. This matter was of vast importance to Southland and to the southern portion of the South Island. Mr. Valentine—who, he regretted, was not now in the House—agreed with him in that respect, and had spoken in that House repeatedly upon the measure, stating it would be quite as convenient to ship their grain from Riverton as to ship their grain from the Bluff, and it would better suit the eastern portion of Southland to have a port at Howell's Point than at the Bluff. It would not cost one farthing more per bushel—nor, indeed, anything more at all—than to send their grain to the Bluff. Now, if they asked for borrowing-powers, it would be a very serious matter, because the money might be wasted, and, although the House, in giving borrowing-powers to local bodies, might seem to be not responsible, he said the colony was responsible, and the good name and credit of the colony was responsible on every occasion that borrowing-powers were given to any local body. Therefore they had avoided asking the House

for borrowing-powers. They avoided asking for rating-powers; they simply depended upon the endowment and port dues to sustain the harbour in the same manner that the Bluff was sustained, and by which it was in a remarkably prosperous position. This measure had received very rough treatment from a few honourable members—he believed only a handful—during the last three years on every occasion on which it had been submitted; but he was glad to say that these few were not in the House now. He again appealed to the House to do justice to the Riverton district by passing this measure and sending it to the Upper House, so that it might become law, for, while a magnificent port would be added to the colony, there was no danger whatever of the good name of the colony being injured in consequence. There were in England at the present moment gentlemen who thoroughly believed in the future of the western district. If they put their money there, and took the risk of getting interest for it, why should the House object? Was it not vexatious to the portion of the colony he resided in to see magnificent steamers, bringing the English mails *via* Hobart, passing by the Bluff and going right up to Lyttelton, and then to have these mails coming back by rail again to Invercargill? Why, then, should this state of things be allowed to continue? He did not fear anything personally. It had been said, “If Mackintosh does not get this harbour he will not be returned for Wallace again.” On the last occasion he had been returned for Wallace by a majority of upwards of four hundred, in the face of determined opposition, notwithstanding that he had been unsuccessful in getting the Riverton Harbour Board Empowering Bill passed by the House. He was prepared to allow the recommittal of the Bill—although no doubt an attempt would then be made to injure it—in order that provision might be made that the question should be submitted to the people concerned, the ratepayers of North and South Riverton. They alone were concerned in the matter, because they alone were responsible. He thanked the House for the patient attention it had given him.

Mr. McNAB said, as the honourable gentleman in charge of the Bill had indicated that he would assent to the Bill being recommitted in order that certain clauses might be inserted providing for the taking of a vote of a certain portion of the district, he would move, as an amendment, That the Bill be recommitted for the purpose of inserting the following clauses:—

“11. This Act shall only come into force when its provisions are adopted by the ratepayers of the County of Wallace by a poll to be taken as hereinafter provided.

“12. The provisions of ‘The Regulation of Local Elections Act, 1876,’ shall, so far as they are applicable, apply to the taking of the poll.

“13. The voting-papers shall be in the following form:—

“I vote for the Riverton Harbour Board Empowering Act.

“I vote against the Riverton Harbour Board Empowering Act.

Mr. Mackintosh

“If a majority of the ratepayers vote for the Act, then the Act shall come into operation, but not otherwise.”

When the Bill was passing through Committee there had been a strong expression of opinion that some such clauses should be inserted. He would not take up the time of the House in discussing them, but would content himself with moving the amendment.

Mr. G. J. SMITH seconded the amendment. He understood that the honourable the mover would agree to the recommittal of the Bill for the purpose of considering these amendments, which he (Mr. Smith) hoped would be accepted. He thought it was the wish of the House that the matter should be reconsidered in connection with the amendments that had been given notice of.

Sir R. STOUT hoped the House would not go away with the impression that this place was a harbour. It could only be made a harbour by the expenditure of a very considerable sum of money. It was practically an open roadstead, and would require a very heavy expenditure for the construction of a breakwater or mole. It was true that it was sheltered from some winds, but there were other winds from which it was not sheltered, and the waves broke right into it.

Bill recommitted.

IN COMMITTEE.

Mr. G. W. RUSSELL moved, That the Chairman leave the chair.

The Committee divided.

AYES, 19.

Allen	Massey	Stout
Button	McNab	Thompson
Collins	Meredith	Willis.
Crowther	Mitchelson	
Earnshaw	Newman	<i>Tellers.</i>
Green	Russell, W. R.	Russell, G. W.
Maslin	Smith, G. J.	Tanner.

NOES, 29.

Buddo	Joyce	O'Regan
Cadman	Kelly, J. W.	Parata
Carroll	Kelly, W.	Pinkerton
Duncan	Larnach	Pirani
Flatman	Mackenzie, T.	Seddon
Graham	Mackintosh	Stevens
Harris	McKenzie, J.	Steward.
Hogg	McKenzie, R.	<i>Tellers.</i>
Houston	McLachlan	Buick
Hutchison, W.	Mills	McGowan.

Majority against, 10.

Motion negatived.

Mr. SEDDON moved, That progress be reported.

The Committee divided.

AYES, 21.

Button	Meredith	Tanner
Collins	Mitchelson	Thompson
Crowther	Newman	Willis
Earnshaw	Russell, G. W.	Wilson.
Green	Russell, W. R.	<i>Tellers.</i>
Maslin	Smith, G. J.	Allen
Massey	Stout	Mackenzie, T.
McNab		

NOES, 32.

Biuck	Houston	Mills
Cadman	Hutchison, W.	Parata
Carncross	Joyce	Pinkerton
Carroll	Kelly, J. W.	Seddon
Duncan	Kelly, W.	Smith, E. M.
Flatman	Larnach	Stevens
Graham	Mackintosh	Steward
Hall	McGowan	Ward.
Hall-Jones	McKenzie, J.	<i>Tellers.</i>
Harris	McKenzie, R.	O'Regan
Hogg	McLachlan	Pirani.

PAIR.

<i>For.</i>	<i>Against.</i>
Morrison.	Buchanan.

Majority against, 11.

Motion negatived.

Mr. SEDDON moved, That the words "County of Wallace" be struck out, with the view of inserting the words "Borough of Riverton."

The Committee divided on the question, "That the words 'County of Wallace' stand part of the clause."

AYES, 23.

Allen	Maslin	Stout
Bell	Massey	Tanner
Button	McNab	Thompson
Collins	Meredith	Ward
Fraser	Mitchelson	Wilson.
Green	Russell, G. W.	<i>Tellers.</i>
Lang	Russell, W. R.	Earnshaw
Mackenzie, T.	Smith, E. M.	Smith, G. J.

NOES, 30.

Biuck	Hutchison, G.	Mills
Cadman	Hutchison, W.	Morrison
Carroll	Joyce	O'Regan
Duncan	Kelly, W.	Pirani
Flatman	Larnach	Seddon
Graham	Mackintosh	Stevens
Hall	McGowan	Steward.
Hall-Jones	McKenzie, J.	<i>Tellers.</i>
Harris	McKenzie, R.	Carncross
Hogg	McLachlan	Kelly, J. W.
Houston		

Majority against, 7.

Words struck out, and amendment adopted.

Mr. G. J. SMITH moved to insert, after the words "Borough of Riverton," the words "and the whole of that portion of the County of Wallace not included in the rating-area of the Bluff Harbour Board."

The Committee divided on the question, "That the words proposed to be inserted be so inserted."

AYES, 21.

Allen	Maslin	Stout
Bell	Massey	Tanner
Button	McNab	Thompson
Collins	Meredith	Wilson.
Earnshaw	Mitchelson	<i>Tellers.</i>
Green	Russell, G. W.	Fraser
Lang	Russell, W. R.	Smith, G. J.
Mackenzie, T.		

NOES, 32.

Cadman	Hutchison, W.	O'Regan
Carncross	Joyce	Parata
Duncan	Kelly, J. W.	Pinkerton
Flatman	Kelly, W.	Pirani
Graham	Larnach	Seddon
Hall	Mackintosh	Smith, E. M.
Hall-Jones	McGowan	Stevens
Harris	McKenzie, J.	Steward.
Hogg	McKenzie, R.	<i>Tellers.</i>
Houston	McLachlan	Biuck
Hutchison, G.	Morrison	Mills.

Majority against, 11.

Amendment negatived.

Bill reported.

On the question, That the Bill be read a third time,

Sir R. STOUT said he wished to enter his protest against the passing of this measure; and he wished also to meet the suggestion which had been made, that this Bill was what was termed merely a preliminary measure, and that no evil consequences were to be apprehended from the passing of it. He hoped the House would recollect what had happened in connection with other contracts and other measures passed by that House. It had happened that, once that House had passed a Bill or agreed to a contract, if that Bill or contract could not be carried out in the way it was passed it was said the House was in honour bound to pass it in some other shape. If this Bill were passed, and it was found to be unworkable, it would be at once said that the House had affirmed the principle of having a harbour at Riverton. They had heard the same thing in reference to the Midland Railway, and they would have exactly the same thing said in connection with this matter, and it would be said, if a syndicate were once induced to take up the work, that the honour of the colony was pledged, and it would be unfair to the syndicate, after having induced them to take up this business, that the House should not come to their assistance when they were in trouble. He had heard this argument used last session in reference to the Midland Railway, and he expected to hear it again before this session was closed. It would then be said that the consequence of this measure was such that the House should afford assistance to any syndicate that might take the work in hand. He was not going to take up the time of the House by making a long speech against it, but he did hope the House would pause before giving effect to this measure. It was entirely unwarranted from any point of view, and it was inducing people to invest money on what would be practically a fraud, for anybody who undertook the building of that harbour would not get interest upon his money. And was it fair to get people—widows, perhaps—to invest their money in a thing which was utterly useless, and which would not pay? Parliament would be morally responsible if it induced people to do so, and he therefore trusted the third reading of the Bill would not be agreed to.

Mr. BELL moved, That the word "now" be

omitted, for the purpose of inserting "this day six months." It was all very well for the Premier to say "Oh!" He (Mr. Bell) was only speaking for himself when he made this motion; but he contended that honourable members should not vote for the passing of so ludicrous a measure, in the expectation that it would be thrown out by the Upper Chamber. That he would not do, and without any hope of success he intended to divide the House, in order that he, at all events, should not be a party to what was done. He was just as desirous as honourable gentlemen opposite not to do anything unkind to the honourable gentleman in charge of this Bill; but there were limits, and to pass so absurd and ludicrous a measure for the purpose of doing a kindness to an honourable gentleman was, in his opinion, altogether out of the question. He quite understood that there were honourable gentlemen supporting it who did not at all desire that this Bill should pass, or believe it was a measure which Parliament ought to pass. One could not ignore that, because one knew the general sentiment of the House. He would not be a party to the passing of this measure.

Mr. SEDDON said he had listened with some pain to what was said by the honourable gentleman opposite, because from his remarks it would be inferred that those who were voting for this Bill had not that sense of responsibility resting upon them that rested upon him. It was simply a question of difference of opinion upon this Bill. The amount involved was less than £500—the whole amount. It had cost more, session after session, for this Bill than it was worth, and after they had gone through Committee, and the voice of the House had been heard upon it, there were still further protests raised. If the honourable member voted against the Bill he was doing his duty according to his convictions, but it was another thing to move the amendment, or feel so strong upon the question. He would ask that they should get the Bill out of the way. Let those who were in favour of it vote for it; and let those who were against it vote against it—that would be a substantial protest.

Captain RUSSELL said he thought the Premier was quite wrong when he said there was the same sense of responsibility in the honourable members who had been supporting this Bill as in those who were opposing it. They all, of course, would like very much to pay a compliment to the honourable gentleman in charge of the Bill, and they would like to be as civil to him as they possibly could. But there was a very great principle involved in passing such a measure as this. It was a notorious fact that almost all honourable members believed that nothing would come of the Bill, and that, even if they passed it, if anything at

5.0. all could come from it, it would only be misfortune for Riverton and the people connected with it, and would probably lead to discredit being cast on the colony. If they examined the plans just laid before them it was not difficult to see, and even if they did not have the plans put before them all could

Mr. Bell

understand, that no more ridiculous proposal was ever placed before a body of sane men than the proposal for the construction of these harbour-works, which could not be required for many years. They had been shown a pretty little picture of a ship lying alongside the proposed breakwater with only 15ft. of water at her stern and 24ft. at her bows; and he really asked the House to bear in mind the fact that the ocean-steamers of the future would be very large vessels, not small craft like this. Year by year larger vessels were being employed to take away the produce of the colony. Yet here they had a vessel with its bows in 24ft. of water, and its stern in 15ft. of water. This was what the Minister had described to the House as a magnificent harbour.

Mr. SEDDON said it was a misprint.

Captain RUSSELL had no doubt it was not a misprint, and many other things appeared to be called misprints. But the very situation of the mole of this breakwater was in itself sufficient to condemn it absolutely. Here they had put down, at a point where the rocks jutted out into the South Pacific Ocean, very like Terawhiti, in Cook Strait, a mole exposed to the South Pacific Ocean, and swept by every gale that came from the east or anywhere north of east. Why, any vessel that dared to lie alongside this breakwater would, during the great bulk of the year, have no kind of protection whatever, while the depth of water at the breakwater was so little that even a small vessel would scarcely dare to go alongside and lie there. To begin with, there had been no information whatever laid before them to show there was any real necessity for this harbour, and they had to remember that the Bluff Harbour was close to it, and all kinds of traffic went there; and not only had they not attempted to show that it was practicable to make this harbour, but no attempt had been made to show that any necessity existed for it. What were the circumstances which were put before them? One circumstance that was put before them, according to the Premier, and to the honourable member for Wallace, who was in charge of the Bill, was that only a portion of the County of Wallace, the only district possibly to be served by the harbour, was interested in this Riverton Harbour: that was to say, not more than one-third, in fact less than one-third, of the people of Wallace County were interested in it. If, therefore, only one-third of the people in this small district could be considered to be interested in the harbour, he was entitled to say there was no real necessity for it. They were told that the Borough of Riverton itself was alone interested in the construction of this harbour—he took down these words; and the credit of the colony—for, although money was not involved, yet the credit of the colony extended to other things besides pounds, shillings, and pence—was to be jeopardized. This work was to be undertaken in a borough which, as he understood, was not increasing in numbers, and which had at present only a population of a few hundreds, with only two hundred and fifty ratepayers;

and yet the credit of the colony was to be pledged to support a Bill for the construction of a harbour for so small a population as that. What, really, did the borough want? No doubt, if the Bill were passed and persons were found foolish enough to go and spend money there, it might have the effect of bringing a brief day of prosperity to Riverton. Let them take example, however, from the history of most of the artificial harbours of New Zealand. They would see that, although the original proposal in each case had been to expend a moderate sum of money, yet continually fresh applications were made to the House for further borrowing-powers, so as to complete the harbours which were so crudely commenced. Not only had that been the case, but at the present time it was impossible to say that any single artificial harbour in the colony had proved to be a success. And yet here they were invited to allow harbour-works to be commenced in such a position that no sane man could expect success to result from them. As pointed out by the honourable member for Wellington City (Sir R. Stout), they would be liable in the same way as the colony had been to some extent liable for alleged misrepresentation in connection with the Midland Railway; and the mere fact of the House agreeing to the passage of such a Bill would be quoted probably as a reason for some part of the expenditure being made good. Did any honourable member believe it possible to make such a harbour as this a success? If such a harbour were needed, and was to be made a good use of, and there was a reasonable possibility of making one, did honourable members think that the population of that district was able to maintain two harbours—one at the Bluff and one at Riverton—so closely adjacent to each other? Certainly no reasonable man could believe such to be the case. It seemed to him this was another instance of the desire of this self-reliant, non-borrowing Government to get money to spend recklessly, whether a good result would accrue from it or not. This distinguished the whole of their proposals. It was an endeavour to get public money to spend, whether there was any benefit to result from it or not. The whole system of borrowing in connection with our harbours certainly required fresh consideration. In this case no person had endeavoured to show the necessity for this harbour, and yet, in a House the members of which were supposed to have come fresh from the people, animated by a desire to keep the expenditure of the colony within reasonable bounds, they were invited to spend money which could have no possible effect except to inflict a certain amount of taxes on the people of this particular district of Wallace and Riverton. Although the money which was required for the construction of the proposed harbour-works was expected to come from people outside New Zealand, and there was no rating-area to be damaged by the construction of the harbour, yet eventually it must be the case that interest must be derived from the investment in

some way or another, and, if it did not result in total failure, as he believed it would, it could only have the result of increasing the harbour dues for Invercargill and Riverton, and would have to be paid for by the people resident in the producing area.

Mr. G. J. SMITH would just like to say that the opposition shown to this Bill the other evening was amply justified by the fact that the House, or, rather, the Committee, had, after consideration, inserted the clauses which were brought down to-day. Now, to his mind, the fact was that New Zealand had at the present time too many harbours for its population. They were allowing the people in the various localities to hang burdens around their necks which they were not able to bear. Take, for example, this special proposal for the construction of this Riverton Harbour. The Borough of Riverton at last census was estimated to have a population of 251 rate-payers. The estimated cost of this work was between a quarter and half a million; and to allow such a work to be undertaken by a body of 251 people was absolutely absurd. There was another thing he wished to say—that, so far as this Bill was concerned, he could get absolutely no information at all until the third reading. He had asked the honourable gentleman in charge for information, but for some reason he could not get it; and it was only that day, on the moving of the third reading, that he had got any information whatever, information which he could not get on the second reading or in Committee. He regretted to say, however, that the information that had been supplied did not convince him that the harbour was necessary, or that it was in the interest of the people of the locality itself. He wished to record his protest against such a measure as this being passed, knowing, as he did, that the majority of members hoped and believed it would be of absolutely no effect, and relied on the Bill being killed in another place.

Mr. EARNSHAW thought, in view of the falling revenue of the colony, also having regard to its railways, they should look at this question narrowly. It was not as if Riverton were an isolated district. It was connected with the Bluff, from which it was only something like twenty miles distant. That being the case, and the people there not having to go over hilly country like that between Dunedin and Oamaru, there could be no question that the freight charges must be very low indeed between Riverton and the Bluff. If they were asked to construct this port for the farmers' benefit, it could not be held that they were not able at present to get their produce to market at reasonable rates, and almost every member of the House must know that if a harbour were constructed at Riverton the charge that would eventually come upon that sparsely-populated district would be very heavy indeed. The wharfage dues on grain would exceed the freight chargeable by railway to the Bluff, and therefore he thought they should protect the people of the County of Wallace

from this Bill being thrust upon them. He was not at all sure that there was any evidence that the people of the Wallace County had requested this Bill. It practically emanated from a few persons resident in the Riverton Borough. Now, the plans which the honourable member for Wallace had distributed around the House clearly proved the justice of the contention he (Mr. Earnshaw) had held from time to time as to the excessive cost of this breakwater. The mole of the breakwater was right out to the seven-fathom limit. In 42ft. depth they had to construct a mole, and they would have a breakwater exposed to the ocean swell from the South Pacific. He asked the House what kind of work would have to be built to withstand this strain. In order to clearly realise how impracticable this work was, they had but to consider what was the strain which the breakwater at Oamaru had to withstand, sheltered as it was by a point of land; and yet a breach had been made in the back of that breakwater two or three times, and, in fact, the people there never knew from day to day when it might not break again. Now, he opposed this Bill, although it was quite true he had voted for it on two previous occasions, but then it was only to give the honourable gentleman that assistance which he thought any honourable gentleman should have, from a party point of view, in introducing a Bill. But from the moment in which he was able to get the engineer's evidence on the measure he had steadily opposed it, as he would do to the end. He said again, deliberately, that the engineer's report had been purposely withheld from members of the House. It was there in other years, and, for reasons best known to those who took it away, all at once it was, very curiously, missing. At the same time copies of that report were in the possession of the Riverton Harbour Board, they were in the possession of the Marine Engineer, and could be got and placed upon the table of the House if the member in charge, or the Government, had been desirous that honourable members should have a true view of this question. But there could be no blinking the fact that the support the honourable gentleman got from the Government had been because of the loyal support he had accorded them, and not at all upon the merits of the measure. It was to be regretted that there were those who sat upon the Government benches who had not openly faced the House on this question, instead of maintaining a remarkable silence. It had been only the support given to a loyal and faithful supporter, and he could quite understand such support being given to any member who had supported the Government so faithfully as the honourable member for Wallace. At the same time, the Premier should realise the duties of his position, and guard the ratepayers of New Zealand against a further burden being put upon them in the shape of another loan, for it was utterly impossible that the Wallace district for the next fifty years to come would carry a

Mr. Earnshaw

population that could pay wharfage charges sufficient to meet anything like the amount of interest on the money that would be involved or required to build a breakwater and wharf on the plans indicated to the House. He had been informed by a marine engineer that the money proposed to be spent would not be at all sufficient to guard against the enormous swell which rolled in on that coast, but that it would be necessary to have a curved end and mole of enormous strength to withstand the pressure which would be brought upon it, and even then the result of the work would be problematical. In his opinion, it was a measure which every member in the House should be called upon to oppose, for even a loyal supporter of the Government should not be allowed to carry through a measure which would in the end evidently be disastrous to New Zealand. He had opposed the measure honestly, and not at all from any feeling against the honourable gentleman, because he had a very kindly feeling indeed towards him.

Mr. ALLEN said it was well known to the House, or it ought to be, that sometimes out of a very little thing very large consequences arose. The House had had to consider the results of action very similar to that proposed to be taken in regard to this Bill. That matter had been one of the most disturbing elements that had ever entered the walls of the Chamber. Every session for the last five or six years they had had coming up for discussion a matter which had been the result of action similar to what was proposed in this Bill. He referred to the question of the East and West Coast Railway. If honourable members would refer to the original Act which first started the East and West Coast Railway, they would find in it a clause almost identical with a clause in this Riverton Harbour Board Bill. He would read the clause which really started the East and West Coast Railway negotiations. It would be found in the Act of 1884, clause 4:—

"Notwithstanding anything contained in 'The Railways Construction and Land Act, 1881,' the Governor in Council may, at any time prior to the first day of the session of the General Assembly now next ensuing, contract under the provisions of the principal Act and this Act with any company, syndicate, or person, whether acting on behalf of itself or himself or as the duly-authorized attorney or agent of any other company, syndicate, or person, for the construction of a line of railway to connect the east and west coasts of the Middle Island by such route as the Governor in Council shall determine."

If honourable members would look at the 3rd clause of the Bill now before them they would find that the purport was almost exactly the same:—

"The Council may upon the passing of this Act negotiate with any company or body of persons incorporated or thereafter to become incorporated, either in the Colony of New Zealand or the United Kingdom, and duly empowered and entitled to carry on business

in New Zealand, for the construction of further harbour-works in the said Port of Riverton by such company or body of persons as aforesaid."

This Bill gave power to a syndicate to do certain work; and honourable members—both those supporting the Bill and those opposing it—would see that it was a similar provision to that contained in the East and West Coast Railway Act. He presumed the Premier relied upon the fact that this Bill would go to another place and receive its quietus; but, he asked, was it fair that the members of this House should send the Bill to another place with the deliberate intention of having it killed there? Had they not pluck enough to say that the measure was an improper one, and they would have none of it, even though in doing so they should injure the feelings of one of their own supporters? It was far better for the time being to do a little temporary injury to a supporter's feelings than to send the Bill up to another place in order that it might be thrown out there; otherwise they would create enmity between the honourable gentleman who had brought in the Bill and the members of another part of the Legislature. He did not know whether it was the deliberate intention of members to create an ill-feeling between another place and the honourable member for Riverton. If that was the intention, surely it was a very low class of political scheming. The Premier had said that this was only a very trivial matter, and that the endowments under consideration were of no consequence whatever. That might be so at present, and they might not be of great value, as he understood they lay between low- and high-water mark; but they might eventually be reclaimed, and then, possibly, they would rise to be of considerable value. It was not the question of endowments that he wished to refer to, but the powers that were to be given to this syndicate when it was brought into existence. Under the Riverton Corporation Empowering Act of 1889 certain powers were given to the Riverton Borough Corporation, and these powers were now handed over under this Bill to the proposed syndicate. The syndicate could raise a loan of £2,000 under one Act, and £500 under another. The Premier might say this was a trivial matter, but out of these small things very large things accrued. The matter he had mentioned was, to his mind, the danger in the Bill. It was all very well to put through an Act that appeared harmless, the consequences of which they could not, or would not, see; but some of them could see the possible consequences of this Bill, and therefore they were obliged to vote against it on all occasions. The Premier had also told them as a reason for passing the Bill—and he would like the House to know it—that this Bill had come up to the House year after year, and it cost so much every session to consider that it would be better to put it through and have done with it. Of all the arguments ever used in favour of the passing of a measure that was the most curious one he had ever heard. A

bad Bill in every sense was to be got out of the way in order to save the expense of considering it year by year. For his part, he could not understand arguments of that kind, and it only showed that the Premier could not find some really more solid reason for asking the House to vote for the Bill. That was the fact. But they had to consider this: that the construction of this work would cost a considerable amount of money, and he did not know that they need go any further for a sufficient inducement to the House to throw the Bill out on the third reading. If they threw it out now, why could they not have thrown it out on the second reading?—and he believed that would have been done by a large majority but for the party call. If they had done that the honourable gentleman would have found that the feeling of the House was strongly against the Bill; he would not have brought it up again, and the House would have been saved further loss of time in considering this very useless and ridiculous measure. What had been the cause of the support given to the Bill? It really had been the party call.

Mr. SEDDON asked if that was the reason why the Opposition voted against it.

Mr. ALLEN said the Opposition voted against it because they believed the Bill to be a bad one in every respect; and he would say that those honourable gentlemen who did not vote according to their opinions, but in accordance with the party call, were not the representatives of the people. This was a Bill that every member should be allowed to vote on entirely as he thought fit and as his conscience directed him. In the case of a local Bill no whipping of any kind should be allowed; and if this sort of thing were to be allowed to take place he was afraid he should very soon have to reverse the vote he had given only last night. He had always held the opinion that the present system of government was a good one; but if these tactics were adopted it would be a very strong inducement to him to alter his opinion as to the present system of government, and to vote in another direction.

The hour of half-past five having arrived, Mr. SPEAKER left the chair.

HOUSE RESUMED.

Mr. SPEAKER resumed the chair at half-past seven o'clock.

FACTORIES BILL.

IN COMMITTEE.

Clause 2.—Interpretation.

"'Shearer' means and includes every person who, during the season of the year for shearing sheep in any locality, is *bona fide* employed by any owner of sheep in such locality for shearing his sheep."

Mr. REEVES moved to omit the words "for shearing his sheep," and to add, after the word "locality," the words "in actually shearing such sheep, or in any capacity in or about any shearing-shed in connection with such shearing."

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 9.—“ Every person—

“Occupying a factory or workroom shall, within the first twenty-one days of the month of January in every year; or

“Going into occupation of any factory or workroom after the commencement of this Act shall, within twenty-one days of such going into occupation; or

“In occupation of any building or place which, after the commencement of this Act, becomes for the first time, or after a period of disuse again becomes, a factory or workroom, shall, within fourteen days of such building or place becoming or again becoming a factory or workroom,—

serve on the Inspector and on the Board a written application to have such factory or workroom registered under this Act, together with a notice, in such form and in such manner as may be prescribed by regulations, containing particulars of the name and a description of his factory or workroom, the place where it is situate, the nature of the work carried on or to be carried on thereon, a description of the motive-power (if any) therein, and, in case of a copartnership or incorporated company, the name of the firm or company under which the business of the factory or workroom is carried on, together with such further or other particulars as may be required by the regulations.

“In default of compliance with this section every such person shall be liable to a penalty not exceeding ten pounds.”

Mr. REEVES moved to strike out the three first paragraphs, with a view of adding the following words:—

“Occupying a registered factory or workroom shall, within the first twenty-one days of the month of January in every year; or

“Intending to go into occupation of any unregistered factory or workroom after the commencement of this Act shall, before going into such occupation; or

“In occupation of any building or place which after the commencement of this Act is intended to become for the first time, or after a period of disuse is intended to again become, a factory or workroom, shall, before permitting such building or place to become or again become a factory or workroom.”

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 52.—“ Notwithstanding anything to the contrary contained in section three, an Inspector of Factories shall have such rights and powers in regard to every shearing-shed wherein four or more persons are employed, and to every building erected or used for the accommodation of shearers, as he possesses under the different sections of this Act, save and except that such rights and powers are restricted to necessary inspection of the arrangements for the health and comfort of the shearers.

“The Inspector shall in no way interfere in matters concerning the working-hours, holidays, or remuneration of adult shearers, but shall ascertain at least once a year that their

dwelling-places and working-places are in a cleanly, fit, and proper state for the reception of workmen, and that necessary accommodation is provided. If, in the opinion of the Inspector, such fit and necessary accommodation has not been provided, he shall require the employer to amend or enlarge the same in such manner as the Inspector shall by written notice direct.

“If any employer shall not comply with such written notice when served personally upon him or through the post-office by the Inspector, he shall be deemed to act in contravention of this Act.”

Mr. REEVES moved to add the following words: “and shall be liable to a penalty not exceeding five pounds for every day during which such non-compliance continues.”

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 54.—“No person shall to the extent mentioned in the Third Schedule to this Act be employed in the factories or workrooms or parts thereof mentioned in that schedule.

“Notice of the prohibition in this section shall be affixed to all factories or workrooms to which it applies.

“No person shall employ in any factory or workroom any boy under the age of sixteen years for more than forty-five hours in any one week, nor for more than eight hours in any one day.

“No person shall employ in any factory or workroom any woman or girl for more than forty-five hours in any one week, nor for more than eight hours in any one day, nor between the hours of six o'clock in the afternoon and eight o'clock in the morning.”

Mr. REEVES moved to add the following words: “No person shall employ in any factory or workroom any woman during the four weeks immediately after her confinement.”

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 55.—Penalty for breach.

Mr. REEVES moved to add at the end of last paragraph: “Provided, however, that, if in any factory or workroom such permission is granted by the Inspector and acted on by the occupier, then in that factory or workroom all women and young persons shall likewise begin work at that hour, to the intent that all women and young persons may quit such factory or workroom at the one time.”

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 57.—Persons under sixteen not to be employed unless passed the Fourth Public-school Standard.

Sir R. STOUT moved to add, after the words “certified by an Inspector of Schools,” the words “of either the public schools or of any private school,” with the view of striking out from the clause the provision relating to attendance for three consecutive years at a private school.

Amendment agreed to.

Mr. REEVES moved the following addition: “Provided that this section shall not apply to persons who have lived more than three miles from a school, and by reason thereof have, in the opinion of the Inspector, had no adequate

opportunity of complying with the provisions of this section."

The Committee divided.

AYES, 43.

Allen	Larnach	Pinkerton
Buddo	Lawry	Reeves
Cadman	Mackenzie, T.	Saunders
Carnecross	Mackintosh	Seddon
Collins	Maslin	Smith, E. M.
Crowther	Massey	Smith, G. J.
Duncan	McGowan	Stevens
Flatman	McKenzie, J.	Steward
Fraser	McLachlan	Tanner
Hall	McNab	Willis
Hall-Jones	Meredith	Wilson.
Harris	Millar	
Hogg	Montgomery	<i>Tellers.</i>
Joyce	Morrison	Buchanan
Kelly, W.	Parata	Mills.

NOES, 13.

Buick	McKenzie, R.	Stout.
Earnshaw	Newman	
Green	Pirani	<i>Tellers.</i>
Heke	Russell, G. W.	Kelly, J. W.
Hutchison, W.	Russell, W. R.	O'Regan.

Majority for, 30.

Words added.

Clause 61.—Girls under fifteen not to work as type-setters.

Mr. MORRISON moved, That the word "fifteen" be struck out, and "seventeen" inserted in lieu thereof.

The Committee divided on the question, "That the word proposed to be omitted stand part of the clause."

AYES, 35.

Allen	Hogg	Mills
Buchanan	Houston	Montgomery
Buddo	Lang	O'Regan
Button	Mackintosh	Parata
Cadman	Maslin	Pinkerton
Carnecross	Massey	Saunders
Crowther	McGowan	Smith, E. M.
Duncan	McGuire	Thompson
Fraser	McKenzie, R.	Willis.
Graham	McLachlan	<i>Tellers.</i>
Hall	McNab	Hall-Jones
Harris	Meredith	Steward.

NOES, 20.

Bell	Hutchison, W.	Smith, G. J.
Buick	Joyce	Stevens
Collins	Kelly, J. W.	Stout
Earnshaw	Millar	Tanner.
Flatman	Newman	<i>Tellers.</i>
Green	Pirani	Mackenzie, T.
Heke	Reeves	Morrison.

PAIR.

For. Ward. *Against.* Russell, W. R.

Majority for, 15.

Word retained.

Clause 63.—What holidays allowed.

Captain RUSSELL moved to strike out all the words after the words "one o'clock in the afternoon," where they occur in the first part

of the following subsection, with a view to making the Saturday half-holiday compulsory:—

"(2.) Every Saturday afternoon, from one o'clock in the afternoon: Provided that in any city, borough, or town district where it may be found inconvenient that work should cease on Saturdays as before mentioned the Council or Town Board may, by special order, from time to time appoint any other working-day in the week on which women and persons under the age of eighteen years shall have holiday from one of the clock in the afternoon; or such special order may provide and appoint separate working-days in the week on which different classes or sets of workers, being women and such persons as aforesaid, shall have a holiday from one of the clock in the afternoon; and upon any such special order becoming operative this Act shall operate in respect of all persons affected by such special order as if the day or separate day named therein had been mentioned in this Act in place of the word 'Saturday.'"

The Committee divided on the question, "That the words proposed to be omitted stand part of the clause."

AYES, 41.

Allen	Joyce	Millar
Bell	Kelly, J. W.	Mills
Buddo	Kelly, W.	Morrison
Buick	Lang	Parata
Cadman	Lawry	Reeves
Collins	Mackenzie, T.	Russell, G. W.
Duncan	Mackintosh	Saunders
Flatman	Maslin	Smith, G. J.
Fraser	McGowan	Stevens
Graham	McKenzie, J.	Tanner
Hall	McKenzie, R.	Willis.
Hall-Jones	McLachlan	<i>Tellers.</i>
Harris	McNab	Carnecross
Hogg	Meredith	Pirani.

NOES, 12.

Buchanan	Massey	Thompson.
Crowther	Pinkerton	<i>Tellers.</i>
Earnshaw	Russell, W. R.	Montgomery
Green	Stout	Newman.
Heke		

PAIR.

For. Carroll. *Against.* Mitchelson.

Majority for, 29.

Words retained.

Sir R. STOUT moved to add, after the words "in printing offices," the words "for the purpose of printing evening newspapers."

Words inserted.

Mr. GRAHAM moved to add, as a further subsection, "(c.) To prevent any persons being employed in jam-factories on Saturday or any other half-holiday for eight weeks during the fruit-preserving season."

Agreed to.

Clause as amended agreed to.

Clause 64.—“Every factory and workroom shall be closed for the whole day on each statute holiday, and for the whole afternoon of every half-holiday, in the same manner as on Sundays; and no woman or young person under the age of eighteen years who are piece-workers shall be suffered or permitted to work in any factory or workroom on any statute holiday or half-holiday.”

Mr. REEVES moved to strike out the clause.

Agreed to.

Sir R. STOUT moved to insert, “All employes in any factory shall be entitled to the half-holiday provided in subsection two of clause sixty-three of this Act.”

The Committee divided.

AYES, 81.

Allen	Harris	Reeves
Bell	Heke	Russell, W. R.
Buddo	Larnach	Seddon
Cadman	Lawry	Smith, G. J.
Crowther	Mackintosh	Stevens
Earnshaw	McGowan	Stout
Flatman	McKenzie, R.	Wilson.
Fraser	Meredith	
Graham	Millar	<i>Tellers.</i>
Green	Montgomery	Mills
Hall	Newman	Morrison.

NOES, 19.

Buick	Kelly, W.	Tanner
Carncross	Maslin	Thompson
Collins	McLachlan	Willis.
Duncan	McNab	
Hall-Jones	O'Regan	<i>Tellers.</i>
Hogg	Parata	Pinkerton
Kelly, J. W.	Russell, G. W.	Pirani.

PAIRS.

<i>For.</i>	<i>Against.</i>
Carroll	Mitchelson
McKenzie, J.	Buchanan
Ward.	Mackenzie, T.

Majority for, 12.

Words inserted.

Mr. BUDDO moved, That the words “except dairy factories” be inserted in the previous amendment.

Amendment agreed to, and words inserted.

Mr. BUDDO moved, That the word “rabbit-factories” be inserted.

Amendment agreed to, and word inserted.

Mr. G. W. RUSSELL moved, That the words “meat-freezing works” be inserted.

Amendment agreed to, and words inserted.

Mr. PIRANI moved, That the following words be added to the clause: “Provided that where the half-holiday is on any other day than Saturday this clause shall not apply to morning newspaper offices for the purpose of printing and publishing.”

Amendment agreed to, and words inserted.

Clause as amended agreed to.

Clause 85.—“Section forty-three of ‘The Public Health Act, 1876,’ ‘The Factories Act, 1891,’ and ‘The Factories Act Amendment Act, 1892,’ are hereby repealed. But all appoint-

ments of officers, regulations made, and all things done under the said Acts shall be deemed to have been made or done respectively under this Act, and shall continue in force until altered or revoked under this Act.”

Mr. REEVES moved to strike out all the words in the section after the words “regulations made,” and to insert, in lieu thereof, the words “registration certificates granted, and all things lawfully done under the said Act shall be deemed to have been made, granted, and done respectively under this Act, and shall continue in force until altered or repealed under this Act.”

Amendment agreed to.

Bill reported, with amendments.

SHIPPING AND SEAMEN'S BILL.

IN COMMITTEE.

Mr. MILLAR moved to add the following new clause:—

“4A. The Collector of Customs shall require the master or agent of any vessel registered or owned in the colony or beyond the colony, before discharging any seaman who by reason of illness or accident is incapacitated from performing his duties, to deposit with him any sum not exceeding fifty pounds sterling, for the purpose of defraying any expenses which may lawfully be incurred by the Collector of Customs for the maintenance, medical attendance, payment of his passage back to the place where such seaman was engaged, or his burial in case of his death in the colony, in addition to any wages due to such seaman at the date of such discharge; and no clearance shall be granted to any such ship before this section has been complied with: Provided that any portion of such hundred pounds not expended as above specified shall be refunded to such master or agent: Provided also that any seaman so discharged shall, within seven days from the date of his medical attendant certifying he is convalescent, make application to the Collector of Customs to be provided with his passage back to the port of engagement.

“For the purposes of this section, all the powers of recovery conferred upon the Minister of Marine by section ninety-six of the principal Act shall be conferred on all Collectors of Customs in the Colony of New Zealand.”

Amendment agreed to, and clause added to the Bill.

Clause 6.—Number of hands for coastal or intercolonial trade vessels.

Mr. THOMPSON moved to strike out the words “coastal or.”

The Committee divided on the question, “That the words proposed to be omitted stand part of the clause.”

AYES, 26.

Buddo	Hall-Jones	Millar
Cadman	Hogg	Mills
Collins	Kelly, J. W.	Montgomery
Duncan	McKenzie, R.	Morrison
Earnshaw	McLachlan	Parata
Flatman	McNab	Pinkerton

Pirani	Russell, W. R.	<i>Tellers.</i>
Reeves	Smith, G. J.	Hall
Russell, G. W.	Tanner.	Joyce.

NOES, 13.

Allen	Hutchison, G.	Meredith.
Buick	Kelly, W.	
Crowther	Lawry	<i>Tellers.</i>
Harris	Maslin	Graham
Houston	McGowan	Thompson.

Majority for, 18.

Words retained.

Mr. THOMPSON moved, That the Chairman do leave the chair.

The Committee divided.

AYES, 9.

Allen	Houston	<i>Tellers.</i>
Crowther	Kelly, W.	Hutchison, G.
Fraser	McGowan.	Thompson.
Harris		

NOES, 31.

Buddo	Kelly, J. W.	Pinkerton
Buick	Lawry	Reeves
Cadman	Maslin	Russell, G. W.
Collins	McKenzie, R.	Russell, W. R.
Duncan	McLachlan	Seddon
Earnshaw	McNab	Smith, G. J.
Flatman	Millar	Tanner.
Graham	Montgomery	
Hall	Morrison	<i>Tellers.</i>
Hall-Jones	O'Regan	Joyce
Hogg	Parata	Mills.

Majority against, 22.

Motion negatived.

Clause 7.—Rating of seamen.

Mr. HOUSTON moved, That the word "four" be struck out, with a view of inserting the word "two."

Amendment negatived.

Word retained.

Clause 14.—Remedies for recovery of masters' disbursements.

Mr. MILLAR moved, That the following words be added to the clause:—

"Where the owner or owners of any vessel or vessels having on board any indentured apprentice or apprentices shall die, or become insolvent, or sell the vessel, or transfer his or their interest to any other person or persons, the indentures shall *ipso facto* be cancelled, and any moneys paid as premium shall be a charge on the vessel: Always provided that the person or persons to whom such vessel or vessels have been sold or transferred may, with the consent of the parents or guardians of such apprentice or apprentices, substitute his or their names in the indentures as the employer in lieu of that of the previous owner or owners."

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 15, subsection (6).—Assault on officers."

Mr. MILLAR moved the insertion of the words "whilst on the high seas" after the word "engineer."

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 33.—Amendments of principal Act.

Mr. REEVES moved, That the following be inserted after subsection (9):—

"Section two hundred and forty-one: All the words of the first paragraph of the section after 'skill or knowledge,' and the whole of the second paragraph thereof, are hereby repealed, and the following substituted as the second paragraph to the section: 'Such Assessor or Assessors shall be appointed by the Minister, either generally or in each case, or by the Justices or Magistrate holding a formal investigation.'"

Amendment agreed to.

Mr. MILLAR moved, That the following paragraph be added to the section:—

"Section twenty-eight: The following paragraph is hereby inserted after the words 'grade of master,' at end of the third paragraph: 'Every sea-going vessel of twenty tons net register and over, not included in the foregoing provisions, shall carry as master thereof a duly-certificated man, whose certificate shall not be of a lower grade than a home-trade master's certificate.'"

Motion agreed to.

Mr. MILLAR moved to add to the words inserted, "Provided further that any person, upon producing proof to the Minister of Marine of his having been in command of any vessel of twenty tons or over trading on the coast of New Zealand for three years or over since January, one thousand eight hundred and eighty-four, may be granted a certificate of service, and the possessor of such certificate shall be held to be a certificated man."

Amendment agreed to, and section as amended agreed to.

Bill reported, with amendments.

The House adjourned at two o'clock a.m.

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

Friday, 24th August, 1894.

First Reading—Second Readings—Third Readings—
Timaru Harbour District Rating Bill—Ocean-
Beach Public Domain Bill—Middle District of
New Zealand University College Bill—Legitima-
tion Bill.

The Hon. the SPEAKER took the chair at half-past two o'clock.

PRAYERS.

FIRST READING.

Factories Bill.

SECOND READINGS.

Havelock Commonage Bill, Timaru Harbour Reclamation Bill.

THIRD READINGS.

Gaming Bill, Levels County Bill, Pohangina County Bill.

TIMARU HARBOUR DISTRICT RATING BILL.

The Hon. Mr. MACGREGOR, in moving,
That this Bill be now read the second time,

said honourable members would recollect that under the Rating Act of 1882 provision was made for the Property-tax Commissioner supplying all local bodies throughout the colonies with copies of the valuation-rolls, for the purposes of local rating. Under an Act passed last session that provision had been done away with, and in consequence the Harbour Board at Timaru, which was empowered to levy rates for its purposes, and which was dependent upon the contributing local bodies for the valuation-rolls, was in the position that it was left without any proper arrangements for making valuations. The object of the Bill was to supply machinery for the purpose of enabling the Harbour Board to carry out its functions. It had not the effect of increasing the rating-power—it was simply a machinery Bill. There had been no objection from the Local Bills Committee to the Bill, so far as he knew, and he therefore moved the second reading.

The Hon. Mr. RICHARDSON said the honourable gentleman had stated that it did not add to the rating-power; but he would like to ask whether, under the 3rd section, it would not possibly decrease the rating-power.

The Hon. Mr. MACGREGOR, in explanation, said that in boroughs the Rating Act of 1876 was still in operation, and under that Act rates were levied on the annual value. Under the Act of 1882 the rates were levied upon the capital value. There were local bodies carrying on operations under both Acts, and the provision contained in the Bill was intended to supply a basis of valuation where the local bodies assessed the rates under the Act of 1876.

The Hon. Mr. RICHARDSON presumed the matter had been gone into carefully.

The Hon. Mr. MACGREGOR said the Bill had been prepared by the solicitors to the Harbour Board.

The Hon. Mr. STEVENS desired to call the attention of the Hon. Mr. MacGregor to a point which he could probably explain. He understood the honourable gentleman to say that the only object of the Bill was to remedy the inconvenience that would arise from the alteration of the rating system caused by an Act of last session. It was quite obvious that this Bill was a special Bill for a special locality. He understood that there was a Bill of a general character under the charge of the Government in another branch of the Legislature, which embraced the whole question. He would not be disposed to say this Bill should not be passed on that account, but it was a matter for consideration whether one particular locality should obtain a remedy for a difficulty, and that such a measure should not be general in its application. He thought the mover of the Bill, in his explanation, fell into a slight inaccuracy. He understood the honourable gentleman to say that all boroughs were rated on the annual value.

The Hon. Mr. MACGREGOR.—Not all. As a rule they are not.

The Hon. Mr. STEVENS said that originally, when the alteration was made, the boroughs

made use of the Act of 1876, and took the annual value, or they might take the capital value; and subsequently the Legislature enabled those who had taken the capital value to go back to the annual value. They should not run away with the idea that all boroughs in the colony were on the footing the Hon. Mr. MacGregor had indicated in his remarks.

The Hon. Mr. SHRIMSKI entirely agreed with the remarks of the Hon. Mr. Stevens. It would have been far better had the Government brought in a measure that would have embraced the whole of the local bodies, instead of an Act being passed dealing with only one. This Bill, if passed into law, would place other local bodies in a very awkward position, supposing they were not placed in the same position, as they depended on the rates to get the money to pay their interest. The suggestion that the Government should bring in a general measure was therefore the right one.

The Hon. Mr. MACGREGOR said it was perfectly correct that under the Act of 1876 it was optional for boroughs to rate under that Act or not. As a matter of fact, that Act was in operation in the Borough of Timaru; and the explanation he had given in answer to the question of the Hon. Mr. Richardson was sufficient to show that the basis of sixteen times the annual value mentioned in the Bill was merely a method of arriving at the capital value of the land. With regard to a general measure, he did not think that the Bill the Government intended to bring in would meet a case of this kind. He understood it was merely a Bill to provide for rating on unimproved values, and would not affect the security previously given.

Bill read the second time.

OCEAN BEACH PUBLIC DOMAIN BILL.

The Hon. Mr. MACGREGOR said this was a Bill that was intended to effect a slight amendment in an Act passed in 1892 which constituted the Ocean Beach Public Domain Board. Under that Act the Board was authorised to borrow the sum of £10,000 in instalments not exceeding £2,000, and extending over a period of five years. The Board seemed to have come to the conclusion that it was not desirable to borrow money under that Act, but that the preferable course would be to obtain power, instead of raising money by loan, to expend the money raised by taxation directly upon the improvement of the Domain. That was the whole object of the Bill—to enable the local body, instead of borrowing the sum of £10,000, to levy a rate upon the several boroughs in the vicinity not exceeding $\frac{1}{4}$ d. in the pound. He believed that would enable the Board to raise enough money to put them in a position, at all events, to save from further damage and to improve to a considerable extent this important Domain—namely, the sandhills of Dunedin. The amount to be derived would not probably be sufficient to enable the Board to carry out any extensive operations such as were contemplated at the time the Act was passed in 1892; but the

Hon. Mr. MacGregor

Board seemed to prefer that for the present the expenditure should be restricted within narrower limits. However, he understood the Board was unanimous in thinking that the course proposed by this Bill was preferable to the other for the present. This Bill was not intended in any way to repeal the clause of the other Act, but was merely to give the Board the alternative. He moved, *That the Bill be now read the second time.*

The Hon. Mr. OLIVER said the reasons given by the honourable gentleman in moving the second reading of the Bill were not sufficient, in his opinion, to warrant the Council in interfering with the action that might be taken under the Act which they had passed two years ago. That Act had not been brought into play at all, owing, he believed, to the selfish objections entertained by some of the suburban boroughs. The proposal to rate at a halfpenny in the pound the City of Dunedin and suburban boroughs for a period of five years would not suffice to carry out the work which was so desirable. The proposal in the Act which the Legislature then passed was that £10,000 should be borrowed, the repayment to extend over a period of twenty years, not more than £2,000 to be raised in any one year, for the purpose of constructing the necessary and desirable works not only for the protection of the flat land, which contained a large number of houses between the sandhills and Dunedin, but also to provide a suitable terrace or drive along the sandhills. That district, even in its unimproved state, was frequented by an immense number of people every week; but if it were beautified in the way proposed by the promoters of the Act of two years ago it would be a very attractive feature, and would not only be useful in adding to the attractiveness of the district, but would encourage the keeping of vehicles and horses. The proposal contained in this Bill to confine the expenditure within very small limits indeed—the money to be raised by a rate extending over five years to be the only money expended—would be quite insufficient to carry out this very useful and desirable work. The failure of the Act which had already been passed had been the outcome of a decided set made against this Bill on the part of the individuals connected with these suburban municipalities. In point of fact, in both instances the largest portion of the expense would have to be found by the City of Dunedin. It seemed to him that the desire of the City of Dunedin should be respectfully considered by the Council. The proposal now before them was to cast on the present generation—in fact, on the ratepayers during the next five years—the whole of the expense to be met. That expenditure, as he had said, was quite insufficient to accomplish anything worth accomplishing, whereas the Act passed two years ago would enable very satisfactory improvements to be made, and the cost would not entirely be borne by the present generation, but also by those who came after them, and who would profit by the work as much or

more than they themselves would do. They should therefore bear a portion of the burden. It seemed to him that no case had been made out for interfering with the legislation passed two years ago. He moved, *That the Bill be read the second time that day six months.*

The Hon. Sir G. S. WHITMORE knew nothing of the particulars of this matter, but would point out to the honourable gentleman that in clause 5 there was a slight departure from Bills previously passed. It appeared that a bare majority of the ratepayers, quite irrespective of the amount of their interests, might control the votes, and he could not help thinking that that was exceedingly unfair to the larger proprietors. It was, he thought, unfairly in favour of the small men, more especially as it meant work which a great number of the working-men would have to do. It was therefore in their power to carry the proposal against those persons who were most largely interested. He would ask the honourable gentleman if it was his intention to deprive the large proprietors of power of voting in accordance with their interests.

The Hon. Mr. RICHARDSON took a somewhat different view of this Bill from that expressed by the Hon. Mr. Oliver, because it appeared to him that not only did this Bill give new powers, but he noticed the power of raising a loan was retained; so that if the Bill were passed a bare majority of the ratepayers might extend the rates for five years and then still borrow £10,000. That was his reading of the Bill, and he would like to ask if it was correct. The other point he wished to raise had already been mentioned by the Hon. Sir G. S. Whitmore.

The Hon. Mr. SHRIMSKI regretted to say that in this instance he could not support the Hon. Mr. Oliver. The place referred to in Dunedin was the only reserve where a great number of the people could go and spend an hour or two at the seaside. There was no other place like it in the vicinity, and he thought some improvement should be made there. The payment of the expenses should not be confined to the present generation only—the future generation should also be held responsible for a portion of the cost, as they would receive the benefit of it. It seemed to him that five years would be sufficient to enable them to carry out the works, but he did not think that that was sufficient within which to pay off the cost. With regard to the security of the sandhills, he would like to find any honourable gentleman in the Council who would be prepared to advance £10,000 on those sandhills. The only way to raise the money was by levying a tax. It would increase the value of the property of the people of the district, however burdensome the tax might appear to the ratepayers.

The Hon. Mr. OLIVER said the security was not sandhills at all. The security was the rate which had been passed two years ago to pay interest. In other respects he entirely agreed with the Hon. Mr. Shrimski.

The Hon. Mr. BONAR did not know much about that part of the country, but it did seem to him a pity that, after so elaborate an Act had been passed in 1892, an alteration should be proposed now by his honourable friend Mr. MacGregor. He would rather see the present Act, by which it was proposed to raise money by debentures having twenty years' currency, and not exceeding £50 each, given effect to. He felt inclined, at any rate, to let this matter stand over for another year, so as to allow the local bodies an opportunity of carrying into effect the Act passed two years ago.

The Hon. Mr. BOWEN said it was evident this Bill was not understood in the Council by a great number of honourable gentlemen, and, as they would all like to know a little more about it, he would move, *That the debate be adjourned*. At present there seemed to be a strong difference of opinion on the subject.

The Hon. Mr. REYNOLDS thought it would be a pity to adjourn the debate. It would be better to deal with this small matter at once. He, for his part, would vote for the Hon. Mr. Oliver's amendment, and his reason for doing so was that the Bill had never been properly advertised in the district. It had been merely advertised in a little suburban paper called the *Workman*, and he believed very few of the people of the City of Dunedin knew anything at all about the Bill, or that it was coming before Parliament. The paper he referred to was a very scurrilous one, and of course those who did not take it in would not know of the proposals contained in the Bill.

The Council divided on the question, "That the debate be adjourned."

AYES, 15.

Baillie	Jennings	Rigg
Barnicoat	Kerr	Shrimski
Bowen	MacGregor	Stevens
Buckley	McCullough	Swanson
Jenkinson	Montgomery	Wahawaha.

NOES, 15.

Acland	Kenny	Richardson
Bonar	Morris	Stewart
Dignan	Oliver	Walker, L.
Feldwick	Pharazyn	Whitmore
Holmes	Reynolds	Williams.

The Hon. the SPEAKER gave his casting-vote in favour of the "Noes."

The Hon. W. DOWNIE STEWART said the Hon. Mr. Bowen, who moved that the debate be adjourned, expressed a desire that further light should be thrown on the subject. This matter was carefully gone into in 1892, at which time there was a sort of scare in Dunedin and the suburbs that these sandhills would be inundated by the sea. It was thought that the sea would make inroads on to the "flat," as it was called. That scare had, he thought, now ceased, and with it a good deal of the enthusiasm about this Bill being given effect to. The objection taken to the Act of 1892 was this: The boroughs as a whole objected to being rated for the improvement of the sandhills; and,

although Dunedin was interested in the matter, the scare was limited to boroughs on the flat. The inhabitants of Dunedin would no doubt benefit by the improvement of the sandhills from a recreation point of view, but the great object for which this Bill was to be passed had practically disappeared. No money had been raised under the Act of 1892, and the matter had been in suspense since then. He believed a section, at any rate, of the Board had decided to have the rate struck, but he believed that the boroughs would have to pay the interest on the money. Whether it assumed the form of a direct rate or whether they were rated indirectly for the purpose of paying interest was a matter which seemed to him of no very great importance. The most reasonable course seemed to be to borrow money on the security mentioned, which he considered ample. However, he did not think, so far as the Dunedin people were concerned, that they were very anxious to do anything further in the matter.

The Hon. Mr. MACGREGOR said it seemed to him the Hon. Mr. Oliver, in moving as he did, and the Hon. Mr. Stewart, professing to move in the same direction, took up entirely contradictory positions. The Hon. Mr. Oliver professed to be very anxious that this work should go on, and intimated that his objection to this little Bill was that the money proposed to be raised would not be sufficient to carry on the work. The Hon. Mr. Stewart, on the other hand, told them he was indifferent about this work; and that nobody wanted the work to go on at all. Now, the position was simply this: that there was not the remotest chance at present of this £10,000 being raised for this purpose. He understood that the Board that had been elected had decided not to raise this money, but the fact was that the leading spirit in that Board had a deep-rooted objection to borrowing money. That was Mr. A. C. Begg, the Mayor of the Borough of Roslyn; and it was that, probably, that influenced that body to a large extent, and, it might be, very properly. But, although that gentleman had an objection to borrowing, he still recognised the importance of the work, and saw that it was impossible to carry out the work under the Act passed two years ago. It was considered that this halfpenny rate would be sufficient to at all events complete a portion of the necessary work for the protection of the inhabitants of the flat. He knew the locality as well as any one in that Council, and he had not the slightest hesitation in saying that the money would be ample for the purpose of protecting the flat. With regard to what the Hon. Sir George Whitmore said as to the vote of a bare majority being sufficient, they all knew that his honourable friend was always anxious to conserve the rights of property; but the same objection lay to the original Act, for the provision in regard to voting was exactly the same as that in the original Act of 1892, and, if a bare majority was all that was required to authorise the raising of the loan, it could not be contended that any difference should be made in authorising the raising of a

rate. With regard to the objection of the Hon. Mr. Richardson, the honourable gentleman would notice that the words in this Bill, in the 2nd clause, were, "The Board may, in lieu of borrowing the moneys authorised in the said Act, levy a rate not exceeding one halfpenny in the pound." The position would be this: that the Board had the alternative of either levying a rate or raising a loan; but the honourable gentleman apprehended that if the alternative proposed in this Bill of making a rate were adopted they would have power to raise a loan as well. He warned all those who were really desirous of seeing this work prosecuted that this was, in all probability, the only chance they would have for many years of making provision for carrying out this work.

The Hon. Mr. OLIVER.—Not at all.

The Hon. Mr. MACGREGOR said his honourable friend was more hopeful than he was, and also more hopeful than the honourable gentleman who assisted him in his motion to throw out the Bill. As to the argument that a certain portion of the cost of this work should be placed upon posterity, he would just point out that under the Act of 1892 the loan was to be paid off, he thought, in twenty years. That was the currency of the debentures, at all events.

An Hon. MEMBER.—"Not exceeding twenty years."

The Hon. Mr. MACGREGOR.—It would be found under section 18. So that that contention fell to the ground.

The Hon. Mr. RICHARDSON thought the honourable gentleman had misunderstood him. Clause 3 said, "The Board may, in lieu of borrowing"; but this was only for five years, when, it seemed to him, there was still power to borrow under this Bill.

The Council divided on the question, "That the words proposed to be omitted stand part of the question."

AYES, 17.

Barnicoat	Kenny	Rigg
Buckley	Kerr	Shrimski
Dignan	MacGregor	Swanson
Feldwick	McCullough	Wahawaha
Jenkinson	Montgomery	Whitmore.
Jennings	Morris	

NOES, 13.

Acland	Oliver	Stevens
Baillie	Pharazyn	Stewart
Bonar	Reynolds	Walker, L.
Bowen	Richardson	Williams.
Holmes		

Majority for, 4.

Amendment negatived, and Bill read the second time.

MIDDLE DISTRICT OF NEW ZEALAND UNIVERSITY COLLEGE BILL.

IN COMMITTEE.

Clause 4.—The Council.

The Hon. Mr. JENKINSON moved, That the number of members to be elected by members of the House of Representatives be "six" instead of "four."

The Committee divided on the question, "That the word 'four' stand part of the clause."

AYES, 21.

Acland	Grace	Richardson
Barnicoat	MacGregor	Stevens
Bonar	Montgomery	Swanson
Bowen	Morris	Wahawaha
Buckley	Oliver	Walker, L.
Dignan	Pharazyn	Whitmore
Feldwick	Reynolds	Williams.

NOES, 5.

Jenkinson	McCullough	Shrimski.
Kerr	Rigg	

Majority for, 16.

Amendment negatived, and word retained.

The Hon. Mr. STEVENS moved to strike out the words "and the members of the Professorial Board hereinafter constituted," at the end of the clause, with a view to providing that four members shall be elected by the graduates only.

The Committee divided on the question, "That the words proposed to be omitted stand part of the clause."

AYES, 14.

Acland	Morris	Swanson
Bowen	Oliver	Wahawaha
Buckley	Pharazyn	Walker, L.
Dignan	Reynolds	Whitmore.
MacGregor	Richardson	

NOES, 12.

Barnicoat	Kerr	Shrimski
Feldwick	McCullough	Stevens
Grace	Montgomery	Stewart
Jenkinson	Rigg	Williams.

Majority for, 2.

Amendment negatived, and words retained.

Bill read the third time.

LEGITIMATION BILL.

On the question, *That this Bill be now read the third time,*

The Hon. Mr. MACGREGOR moved, *That the Bill be recommitted, for the purpose of inserting certain new clauses.*

Bill recommitted.

IN COMMITTEE.

New clause 2.—"Any child born before the marriage of his or her parents (and whether before or after the passing of this Act), whose parents have intermarried or shall hereafter intermarry, shall be deemed, on the registration of such child as hereinafter provided, to have been legitimated by such marriage from birth, and shall be entitled to all the rights of a child born in wedlock, including the right to such real and personal property as might have been claimed by such child if born in wedlock, and also to any real and personal property on the succession of any other person which might have been claimed through the parent by a child born in wedlock."

The Hon. Sir G. S. WHITMORE moved to strike out the words "from birth," with a view to inserting the words "from the date of the marriage of parents."

The Committee divided on the question, "That the words proposed to be omitted stand part of the clause."

AYES, 18.

Acland	Jennings	Rigg
Barnicoat	Kerr	Shrimski
Bowen	MacGregor	Stewart
Dignan	McCullough	Swanson
Feldwick	Montgomery	Wahawaha
Jenkinson	Morris	Williams.

NOES, 8.

Bonar	Pharazyn	Stevens
Buckley	Reynolds	Whitmore.
Oliver	Richardson	

Majority for, 10.

Amendment negatived, and words retained.

The Hon. Sir G. S. WHITMORE moved, That progress be reported.

The Committee divided.

AYES, 19.

Acland	MacGregor	Reynolds
Barnicoat	McCullough	Stevens
Bonar	Montgomery	Stewart
Bowen	Morris	Wahawaha
Buckley	Oliver	Whitmore
Dignan	Pharazyn	Williams.
Jennings		

NOES, 6.

Feldwick	Kerr	Shrimski
Jenkinson	Rigg	Swanson.

Majority for, 13.

Progress reported.

The Council adjourned at three minutes past five o'clock p.m.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.

Friday, 24th August, 1894.

First Reading—Second Readings—Third Reading—Rangiwaea Block—Hermann Friedlander—Porirua Cemetery—Mortgage-tax on Farmers—Inspection of Boilers—Wellington Defences—Little Barrier Island—Waiotapu-Taupo Road—Springburn Post-office—Import Duty on Fruit—Horowhenua Stipendiary Magistrate—Local Government—Land for Settlements Bill—Lease in Perpetuity—Emigration—Tobacco Duty—Mr. Jackman—Government Advertisements—Bill Office—Waipori Miners—Waiau-Kaikoura Mail Service—Police Merit-sheets—Native Reserves Administration Bill—Adjournment—Bellamy's—Monday's Sittings—Factories Bill—Shops and Shop-assistants Bill—Shipping and Seamen's Bill—Hawkers and Pedlars Bill—Rating on Un-improved Value Bill.

Mr. SPEAKER took the chair at half-past two o'clock.

PRAYERS.

FIRST READING.

James Mitchell Trust Bill.

SECOND READINGS.

Master and Apprentice Bill (No. 2), Adulteration Prevention Bill, Rating Bill, Destitute Persons Bill, Designation of Districts Bill, Oaths Bill.

THIRD READING.

Oaths Bill.

RANGIWAEA BLOCK.

Mr. HOUSTON brought up the report of the Native Affairs Committee on the petition of Meiba Keepa te Rangihwinui (Major Kemp). Petitioner prayed that legislation might be passed to enable a rehearing to be made of the Rangiwaea Block, and the Committee reported that they had no recommendation to make. He moved, That the report do lie on the table.

Mr. TE AO moved, That the report be referred back to the Committee for further consideration, on the ground that there was not a full Committee.

Mr. HOUSTON objected to the report being sent back to the Committee. The petition had been before the Committee for a considerable time. It was utterly impossible to get all the members of the Committee to attend every day, owing to the fact that they were also members of other Committees. If the case was referred back, and they waited for a full Committee, it would be put off from day to day till the session was over. Both the Native and European members of the Committee gave full consideration to the case, and they came to the conclusion which was embodied in the Committee's report; and he was perfectly satisfied that if the report were referred back to the Committee the same report would be brought up again. He considered it would be only a waste of time to refer the report back. Every care had been taken by the Committee, who had gone thoroughly into the case.

The House divided on the question, "That the words proposed to be omitted stand part of the question."

AYES, 32.

Buick	Kelly, W.	Parata
Cadman	Lang	Pinkerton
Carncross	Larnach	Reeves
Carroll	McGowan	Saunders
Collins	McKenzie, J.	Seddon
Crowther	McKenzie, R.	Stevens
Hall	McLachlan	Thompson
Hogg	Mills	Ward.
Houston	Montgomery	<i>Tellers.</i>
Joyce	Morrison	Guinness
Kelly, J. W.	O'Regan	Harris.

NOES, 26.

Allen	Maslin	Smith, G. J.
Buddo	Massey	Steward
Duncan	McGuire	Tanner
Green	McNab	Te Ao
Hall-Jones	Meredith	Willis
Heke	Mitchelson	Wilson.
Hutchison, W.	Newman	<i>Tellers.</i>
Lawry	Pirani	Earnshaw
Mackenzie, T.	Russell, W. R.	Stout.

Majority for, 6.

Amendment negatived.

Motion agreed to.

HERMANN FRIEDLANDER.

Mr. JOYCE brought up the report of the Public Petitions Committee on the petition of Hermann Friedlander, who prayed for compensation for injuries sustained when assisting the police. The Committee recommended that the petition be referred to the Government for consideration. He moved, That the report do lie on the table, and be referred to the Government.

Major STEWARD said that, as he came from the Town of Ashburton, where this petitioner resided, and was conversant with the circumstances of the case, he would like to say two or three words to the House. The statement of the petitioner was undoubtedly true. Some years ago a row took place in the street, and the police-constable called upon Friedlander, as an ordinary street passer-by, in the Queen's name. The petitioner did assist, and the consequence was that he was set upon by six or seven men, his teeth were knocked out, and he was so injured about his head that he had been unable for years past to carry on his business in the way he ought to have been able to do. The case had been before the House two or three years ago, at his (Major Steward's) instigation, and provision was made that the petitioner should have a free railway-pass for himself and an attendant, so that he could proceed to the Rotorua baths or elsewhere, if required. The Railway Commissioners had, he believed, since withdrawn this privilege; and the petitioner was now unable to carry on business, and he petitioned for compensation for the injuries received. The case was, he thought, one that deserved consideration at the hands of the House, and he hoped the Government, to whom the matter was to be referred, would take it into consideration and see what they could do.

Mr. McLACHLAN trusted that due consideration would be given to this. The petitioner was unable to obtain a living. He was a tobacconist, but was not now able to follow his business. When the petition came before the Committee he had wired to Ashburton suggesting that petitioner or his friends should send up a medical certificate as to petitioner's present condition; and he hoped the Government would await the arrival of that certificate before deciding the matter. It was a case of great hardship that a man should be rendered unfit to get his own living and to keep his own family as the result of being called upon by a constable to assist in the Queen's name. He thought there was a strong case. All that the Government had done was to pay for three artificial teeth, and to give the man £50. He hoped the Government would not determine what to do before they got further medical testimony.

Motion agreed to.

PORIRUA CEMETERY.

Dr. NEWMAN asked the Minister having charge of the Lunacy Department, If he will assign a portion of land belonging to the Porirua Asylum as a cemetery for the asylum and district?

Mr. REEVES said that he would try to make an arrangement to do this.

MORTGAGE-TAX ON FARMERS.

3.0. Mr. T. MACKENZIE asked the Government, Whether, in view of the expressed desire of the Treasurer to give practical relief to small mortgaged farmers, they will this session amend the Land and Income Assessment Act, so as to allow farmers who are burdened with a mortgage relief from the mortgage-tax to the extent of one penny in the pound in the direction more specifically set forth in the amendment moved last session by the member for Clutha (Vol. 82, page 196)? The amendment was as follows:—

"In the event of any person being liable under this Act to pay land-tax, and owning land to the extent of two thousand pounds improved value on which there may be a mortgage, he shall, in addition to any other exemption he may be entitled to, deduct a sum equal to one penny in the pound from any interest sum that he may have covenanted to pay his mortgagees: and the mortgagees shall also be entitled to deduct any such deduction so actually made from the amount of his land-tax."

It was with a view of assisting to some small extent farmers who were at present mortgaged that he put this question on the Order Paper, and if the Colonial Treasurer would kindly fall in with the suggestion in the question he was quite sure that he would confer a measure of assistance on these farmers. He therefore trusted the honourable gentleman would see his way to make this small remission in this form of taxation. He might add that many years would pass before many of these mortgages would mature and before the farmers could possibly obtain any benefit from the projected scheme of the Government. At present every penny advanced on mortgage was taxed, also any interest in arrear was taxed additionally; while money invested in any other undertaking was free from taxation up to in some cases £7,500. He therefore asked the Treasurer to grant some genuine relief to farmers whose mortgages would not mature for some years.

Mr. WARD might say that the position now was that farmers whose land was burdened with mortgages did not pay the tax directly. He was afraid the proposal of the honourable gentleman for giving these mortgaged farmers relief would be somewhat troublesome to work, and would fail in its object; but he might inform the honourable gentleman that he was of opinion that the interest on both sides should be omitted, and not included in any shape for taxation, and the amending Bill now under consideration proposed to carry that out.

INSPECTION OF BOILERS.

Mr. DUNCAN asked the Premier, Will he give instructions to Boiler Inspectors to take into consideration, when inspecting boilers of engineers and mechanics who have small engines of from one- to three-horse power of new construction, that either the cost of inspection should be reduced or their periodical

examinations should be extended to more than three years? He would draw the Premier's attention to the fact that the income derived from the inspection of boilers more than covered the outlay by a considerable sum at the present time; and that mechanics and engineers in a small way found that the £1 tax every year was rather too heavy a tax upon them, knowing, as they did, far more about boilers and the care that it was necessary to exercise over them than the Inspector could be expected to know about them. He thought there should be some reduction made in the fee, or an extension of the periodical inspection. He therefore trusted the Premier would see his way to grant this request.

Mr. SEDDON said the Act would not permit of an inspection of boilers less frequently than every two years, if the boilers were in use. As the fee payable in respect of boilers working up to five-horse power was only £1 on inspection every two years, 10s. per annum was, under these circumstances, not an excessive charge. It was quite necessary that the safety of lives and property should be secured, and therefore it was considered necessary that this periodical inspection should take place.

WELLINGTON DEFENCES.

Major STEWARD asked the Minister of Defence, If he is aware that the efficiency of the defences of the harbour of Wellington largely depends upon a sufficiency of electric lighting; and, if so, whether he will place on the estimates a vote of, say, £3,000, for the purpose of providing such lighting? In connection with the defences of the port of Wellington they had mines laid down, and cable lines communicating with these from the shore. If trouble ever did arise, and it was necessary for the port of Wellington to be defended, this would happen: that, unless there was a sufficiency of electric lights to command the mine-field, a hostile vessel might send in a boat at night and with grapples either pick up and cut, or explode, the communications with the mines, and when it was wished to prevent the entrance of hostile vessels they would find the mines absolutely useless. He had made inquiries into this matter, and it would be found that the sum he had named would be sufficient to render the defences of the port absolutely complete—namely, three electric lights, at the cost of £3,000. He would ask the Minister whether he was aware of the present insufficiency of electric lights; and, if so, would he ask Parliament to make provision for more lights?

Mr. SEDDON said the electric lighting for forts and mining-fields had already been provided.

LITTLE BARRIER ISLAND.

Mr. MITCHELSON asked the Government, What steps have been taken in respect of the recommendations made by the Native Affairs Committee of last year re completing the purchase of the Little Barrier Island?

Mr. J. MCKENZIE might inform the

Mr. Duncan

honourable gentleman that ten signatures, representing about three-quarters of the island, had been obtained; five signatures, representing the balance, were still outstanding, the Natives refusing to accept the Government offer or to make any reasonable offer themselves. However, steps would be taken during the recess with a view to closing up this purchase.

WAIOTAPU-TAUPO ROAD.

Mr. W. KELLY asked the Minister of Lands, If it is the intention of the Government to proceed at an early date with the formation of the incomplete road between Waiotapu and Taupo, in the thermal-springs district?

Mr. J. MCKENZIE said this was asking the Government to disclose the public-works estimates piecemeal. However, he could only give the honourable gentleman the same answer that he had given to other honourable members—namely, that this work would be considered with the public-works estimates.

SPRINGBURN POST-OFFICE.

Mr. MASLIN asked the Postmaster-General, What action the Government intend to take in response to the petition of residents in the Springburn district asking for a branch post-office?

Mr. WARD said instructions had been given to an officer to visit the place, in order to see whether this was required, and in the meantime provision was to be made in the new schedule of mail-tenders.

IMPORT DUTY ON FRUIT.

Dr. NEWMAN asked the Premier,—(1.) If it be true, as stated in Press telegrams, that the Government have told the Tasmanian Ministry that they do not intend to impose a tax on fruit? (2.) Why Ministers communicated this news, and withheld it from this House? (3.) Have Ministers decided to withdraw any other of their leading proposals?

Mr. WARD said the Government had not done what was stated in the first question, and, consequently, questions (2) and (3) did not require answering.

HOROWHENUA STIPENDIARY MAGISTRATE.

Mr. WILSON asked the Minister of Justice, If he will advise the Governor to give the Stipendiary Magistrate jurisdiction (in bankruptcies in which the liabilities do not exceed £300) under section 8 of "The Bankruptcy Act, 1892," in the Horowhenua County? His object in putting the question on the Order Paper was to see if people at a distance could be saved the expense and inconvenience which were at present entailed upon them, and he hoped the Minister would be able to give him a satisfactory reply.

Mr. CADMAN regretted he would not be able to comply with the request at present. The honourable gentleman would probably be aware that under the Act of last session power was given to the Government to extend the jurisdiction of Magistrates. That had been done in

this district. As he had stated a few days ago, several districts in Wellington, Hawke's Bay, and Taranaki were increasing in population very fast, thereby increasing the duties of the Magistrates, and it was only a question of time when another Magistrate would have to be given among these districts. When that time arrived, he would probably be able to give the extended jurisdiction which the honourable gentleman now sought for.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT.

Mr. GUINNESS asked the Premier, Whether the Government will prepare a measure dealing with the important question of the reform of the system of local government, and introduce such measure into Parliament this session, so as to allow it to be discussed by this House, and to give the local bodies an opportunity during the recess to consider the measure and make suggestions for amending the same? He thought the Government were well acquainted with the fact that the system of local government required immediate reform, and he hoped the Premier would be able to give a satisfactory answer to this question in the direction indicated.

Mr. SEDDON thought it was of the greatest importance that any measure submitted to the House or to Parliament should have been well considered and made as near perfect as it was possible to make a measure before it was introduced. This was a very large question indeed. Ministers had not much time during the session to deal with a matter such as this. They had at the present time the Municipal Corporations Bill, which he hoped would be ready to be brought down in a few days. The Bills they had so far introduced had proved satisfactory, because considerable attention had been paid to them. He was afraid he should not be able to devote that attention this session to this matter that its importance demanded. If he found he was able to do so he should be very much pleased to bring it down later on in the session. In the meantime the suggestion would receive due consideration.

LAND FOR SETTLEMENTS BILL.

Mr. BELL asked the Minister of Lands, Whether he will obtain the opinion of the Law Officers of the Crown upon the question whether, under the Land for Settlements Act as it passed its third reading in this House, he has not the power to contract for the purchase of land in the first year to the amount of one and a quarter millions sterling, provided that such contracts arrange for payments extending over five years, and provided that no more than £250,000 is borrowed and paid in any one year?

Mr. J. MCKENZIE said he would have no objection to ask the Law Officers of the Crown to give their opinion on the subject referred to in the question; but, at the same time, he might tell the honourable gentleman that the Government had no intention of committing the colony to any such thing as this—namely,

to a million and a quarter of money, provided for in this Bill, in the way referred to in the honourable gentleman's question. The Government intended to adhere strictly to the clause in the Bill, which gave them power to expend £250,000 in one year.

LEASE IN PERPETUITY.

Mr. G. HUTCHISON asked the Minister of Lands, What opportunity, if any, is intended to be given this session to amend the Land Act in the direction of periodic revaluations under the tenure known as the lease in perpetuity? In the course of the remarks he (Mr. Hutchison) had made on the third reading of the Land for Settlements Bill he had put such a question as this, and the Minister had promised to answer it in his reply. There was the time-limit, however, which had probably prevented the Minister from dealing with the subject; and, when the question was afterwards repeated, the Minister had desired him to give notice of it.

Mr. J. MCKENZIE was extremely obliged to the honourable member for putting this question. He had not had time the other evening to reply as fully as he could have wished to all the questions put to him on the subject, and he had now to tell the honourable gentleman and the House that he had no intention whatever of asking the House to amend the Land Bill this session. The Government would give facilities to any member opposite, or any other honourable member, if he wished, to test the propriety of having one system of tenure, whatever the House considered that system should be. If he, or any other honourable member, wished to discuss it, facilities would be given for such discussion, but he had no intention of introducing a measure this session.

EMIGRATION.

Dr. NEWMAN asked the Premier, What special steps the Government propose to take to check the large loss of population by emigration? No less than thirteen hundred had left the colony during the last three months in excess of the number of arrivals, and, in view of the continued exodus, he should like to know if the Government intended to take any steps to check it.

Mr. SEDDON said it was quite true that during the last three months there had been a loss over and above those who had arrived in the colony. However, the particular time of the year and the trouble there had been in the other colonies as regarded the shearers to some extent accounted for this. There was nothing at all that need give rise to alarm or that called for special attention; but he hoped the honourable member and those who sat with him on that side of the House would help the Government in carrying the proposals which were set forth in the Budget, so that they might be given effect to as speedily as possible. If they did that, he had no doubt they would find these measures would prove effectual in stopping the loss that had been going on during the last three months.

TOBACCO DUTY.

Mr. PINKERTON asked the Government, If they will take steps this session to encourage the growth and manufacture of tobacco by remitting Excise duty on tobacco manufactured from native-grown or imported leaf? The reason he asked this question was that he was told that certain persons were now prepared to invest a considerable sum of money to encourage the growth and manufacture of tobacco in New Zealand if the Excise duty were limited to a smaller amount than that charged at present. They did not ask in any way for protection beyond that, and he thought it a very important thing that this industry should be encouraged. He was told that about £20,000 would be invested in that industry if facilities were given in the direction he had indicated.

Mr. WARD said it was correct that there were persons prepared to invest a large amount in this industry providing the Government were prepared to give them a concession in the way of a reduction of the excise duty. It had been found, however, upon a very careful calculation, that to do so would entail a loss to the revenue of something like £80,000 a year, and, that being so, the proposal, after being carefully considered by the Government, had been declined. So far as the growth and manufacture of tobacco in the colony was concerned, he thought it as well to give some further information, as a certain amount of misapprehension appeared to exist concerning the matter. The duty on the imported leaf (unmanufactured) was 2s. per pound. If tobacco were made entirely from imported leaf it would contribute 8s. per pound to the revenue—namely, 2s. duty on the imported leaf and 1s. excise. There was, therefore, a strong inducement to use as much native-grown leaf as possible. Nevertheless only a very small proportion was used. He might mention that out of 23,074lb. of leaf used during the half-year ended on the 30th June last, only 396lb. consisted of native-grown tobacco. Now, there they had the fact that, in spite of the fact that the duty was at the rate of 2s. a pound in favour of the locally-grown leaf, the proportion of native-grown leaf used during the half-year he had mentioned was only 396lb. out of a total of 23,074lb. The Government had been very anxious to meet, if possible, the firm which proposed to establish a tobacco-factory in this colony. They asked for the withdrawal of the excise for a few years, and the imposition of 6d. per pound afterwards. But it was found that this would mean a difference in the revenue of something like £80,000, and this was one of the most steady items of revenue upon which the Customs relied. The Government, therefore, did not think, under the circumstances, they could give way to it.

MR. JACKMAN.

Dr. NEWMAN asked the Commissioner of Customs, Whether the Government will give to the petitioner, Mr. Jackman, money compensation or employment in the public service, as recommended by the Public Petitions A to L Committee this session?

Mr. WARD might say that when Mr. Jackman was in the public service he was a very valuable officer; he performed his work vigorously, and he had nothing whatever to say against him. On the contrary, he thought Mr. Jackman had done his work exceedingly well. But, the late Government having decided to retire Mr. Jackman on pension, the present Government believed in the principle that a pensioner should not be re-employed after being retired and being in receipt of a pension. That was the only reason the Government had against the re-employment of Mr. Jackman: that, as he was a pensioner, it was not desirable they should do so. They had nothing whatever against him; it was purely on that ground he was not re-employed. The question of compensation would come up for consideration when all the petitions referred to the Government were to be dealt with.

GOVERNMENT ADVERTISEMENTS.

Upon Sir R. Stout being called upon to ask the Premier, "If it is true that the boycott applied by the Government to certain Opposition newspapers, in regard to ordinary Government departmental advertisements, has been also applied regarding bankruptcy advertisements paid for by the creditors of estates?"—

Mr. CADMAN said he desired to draw attention to the language in which the question was couched. This language being objected to, he wished it to be amended before he answered the question. He certainly trusted the honourable member did not mean to impute anything offensive in the language he used, and he therefore asked him to alter the wording of the question; otherwise he must decline to answer it.

Sir R. STOUT did not see anything objectionable in the language used in the question, because the fact came out the other night in Committee of Supply that the Government had discontinued the publication of their advertisements in certain newspapers, and, that being so, he thought he was justified in using the words he had embodied in the question. He did not know what other words he could use, or what better language could be substituted in asking his question. He therefore asked the question.

Mr. CADMAN said, if the honourable gentleman was desirous of knowing whether instructions had been given as he indicated, the question could be easily amended to elicit an answer. If the honourable gentleman asked the question in some other way he would answer it; otherwise he must decline to do so.

Sir R. STOUT said the honourable member might decline to answer. He would, however, put it at another time.

BILL OFFICE.

Mr. McLACHLAN asked the Government, If they will take into their consideration the necessity of making better arrangements for a more equal distribution of Bills than now exists in the Bill Office; and also, if they will see that instructions are given to the officers in

the Bill Office to arrange all Bills in boards, and index the same, for the convenience of members? He had been prompted to put this question on the Order Paper by a circumstance that had occurred in one of the Committee-rooms the other day. There was a conversation amongst certain members as to the number of copies of the Licensing Bill which were available in the Bill-room. He had made application for two copies, and he knew that another honourable member at the same time had made application also, and, like himself, got two copies. He (Mr. McLachlan) was perfectly satisfied with these two copies; but when he went to the Committee-room there was a general expression of opinion that there was an insufficiency of copies of Bills, and that honourable members' files of Bills were not complete; a great many members complained that they got a Bill without the fly-sheet accompanying it. In fact, one member stated the grievance was of such a grave character that he was disposed to paint the Chamber red over this Bill business. Now, one honourable member present there stated that he himself had obtained eight copies of the Bill, while other members could not obtain more than one copy. He considered this grievance required remedying; or that Mr. Speaker, whose province it was to make the orders, should see that each man was treated alike, and that no one member should be able to go to the Bill-room and, either through influence or through a promise of something to the clerks in the Bill-room, obtain more copies than other members who simply went and asked for them. He himself had not asked for more than two.

Mr. WARD asked the honourable member to state what member it was who obtained eight copies of the Bill.

Mr. McLACHLAN would not mention his name.

Mr. WARD thought it was only right they should know.

Mr. McLACHLAN said it was Mr. Maslin. Now, he had no objection to members getting them, if all were treated alike; but in this particular instance there was a representative of what was called the temperance party obtaining eight copies of the Bill to distribute among the temperance organizations throughout his electorate, while he (Mr. McLachlan), who represented the adjoining district, with only a river between it and the honourable gentleman's district, had to be content with two copies. The people there would be apt to say that Mr. Maslin was attending to his business, while their own member was not, because he could not get copies of the Bill to send to them. The honourable member for Marsden was present on the occasion to which he had referred, and had informed him that he had got two copies.

Mr. THOMPSON said that was all he asked for.

Mr. McLACHLAN said he himself had asked for all he could get, and he only got two. He was not moving in this matter out of

any feeling towards any one connected with the Parliament Buildings at all; but he thought some better system should be established than existed at present. With regard to the latter part of the question, if one looked around and saw the litter of papers on the benches of honourable members one would admit that there was some necessity for improvement in this respect. There were one or two honourable members, of course, whose papers were always available, being neatly arranged and properly indexed, so that they were able to turn up any particular one at once; but they were the exception. Many honourable members were twitted with not reading the Bills that were brought before them, and he knew in his case he had often to turn the parcel of Bills upside down in order to find the one he required, and sometimes was not able to get it, and consequently could not follow the business through the Committee. It would be a very trifling matter to arrange the Bills for honourable members; and, if there were not enough messengers in attendance, he thought they might very well employ one or two during the session for this purpose. He believed some honourable members paid for having their papers bound, but if they were all bound alike there would be no suspicion of favour being shown. He hoped the Government would consider this.

Mr. SEDDON said the Government had not interfered with the distribution of Bills by the Bill clerks, but it was well that the question had been raised. He ordered not less than a thousand extra copies of the Licensing Bill, and the Bill clerks should have been told that it would be better for the future that according to the number of copies available the proportion allowed each member should be the same. It was quite right that one member should not ask for a dozen copies if other members were only able to get two or three. He had been asked for twenty copies of the Bill for one member, and in justice to the honourable member he must say the member offered to pay for them. But as there was a demand for the Bill in question, and as it was necessary that the fullest information should be given to the people of the colony, he would order an extra number of copies, and would give instructions that they should be equally distributed amongst honourable members. With regard to the latter part of the question, it certainly would be a great convenience, and he believed it would be a saving of printing, if the Bills were put into clips for the convenience of members. Sometimes there were members who did that

for themselves, but it took up a good deal of time. Whether the messengers could, at times, devote their attention to this without interfering with their other work was a matter which he would inquire into, and if he found it could be done without extra expense he thought it might be done, for the convenience of members.

Mr. SPEAKER said he had thought it right to get a report from the Clerk of the House

in regard to this matter. He had received a memorandum to this effect:—

"Bills are distributed equally and to all members alike.

"One copy of every Bill introduced is placed in each member's pigeon-hole, and in the case of Bills of large public interest, such as the Licensing Bill, the Government is requisitioned for an extra supply, in order that such number of extra copies as members require may be supplied to them. Five hundred copies of Licensing Bill and Railway Bill were printed—sufficient to supply six extra copies to all members who applied for them.

"Mr. McLachlan made no application or request to either the clerk or the messenger in charge of the Bill Office.

"With regard to latter portion of the question, such a complete file (indexed to date) is supplied daily for use of Speaker. To prepare the same for seventy members would require a large staff of clerks.

WAIPORI MINERS.

Mr. CARNCROSS asked the Government, Whether they will immediately make provision for finding temporary employment for the unfortunate miners so long thrown out of work at Waipori through the cessation of operations by the dredges on the Waipori River, seeing the delay that has occurred, and is likely to still continue before the dredges can be started again? The circumstances in connection with the matter were so well known that not much explanation was necessary; it would suffice to say that a considerable number of men, with their wives and families, were rendered almost destitute by the stoppage of the dredging; and he should be glad to hear that the Government could give them some temporary relief.

Mr. SEDDON said this was not a question regarding mining matters, but it was more a question of finding work for men who were in destitute circumstances, and who were out of employment owing to being unable to obtain work at mining operations. As the honourable gentleman knew, this was a very large question. The matter was at present receiving the fullest consideration at the hands of the Government. Only that day the report had been completed upon the question, and was now under the consideration of his colleague the Minister of Mines. The Government were quite aware that, whilst the dispute had been going on, a large number of men had been unable to obtain work; but if they were unable to get work at dredging they should not sit down and wait for work to turn up—they ought to go and look for it where there was work for them. That would be the proper course for them to take. If there was any work handy or convenient to them the Government would be only too well pleased to give them the opportunity. There were men in Christchurch, Wellington, and Auckland, and other parts, who could not get work, and who had to go to where there was work. There might, of course, be some other reasons for these men remaining there out of work so long. His sympathies were with

Mr. Speaker

these men. Inquiries would be made in different departments as to whether there was any suitable work, and the Government would do the best they could under the circumstances.

WAIKOU-KAIKOURA MAIL-SERVICE.

Mr. MEREDITH asked the Postmaster-General, Whether he will, when inviting tenders for the mail-services for the ensuing year, make provision for a tri-weekly mail between Waiau and Kaikoura, and *vice versa*? Kaikoura was situated 120 miles north of Christchurch. It was a thriving settlement, containing about fifteen hundred people, and they were cut off from Christchurch by a break of country sparsely populated for about fifty-five miles, and at the present there was only a weekly mail. Certainly, there were occasional mails by steamer, but they were not to be depended upon. The settlers complained that they were cut off from communication with Christchurch. He hoped the Minister would see his way to do something in the way of acceding to the request.

Mr. WARD said the Government proposed to call for tenders for a tri-weekly mail-service, and if they were sufficiently reasonable in proportion to the amount of mails to be carried it would be done.

POLICE MERIT-SHEETS.

Mr. CARNCROSS asked the Minister of Defence, Whether he would be agreeable to have the regulations of police discipline so amended that police-constables may, by long-continued good conduct, be enabled to work off black marks that have been recorded against them upon their "merit-sheets"? He knew it was not wise to attempt to interfere with discipline in connection with a semi-military force such as the police, but there were some circumstances in connection with this matter which should, he thought, be brought before the House. When a recruit entered the service he got what was known as a defaulters' sheet, and on that sheet was entered every little trivial breach of discipline—such small offences as taking one glove off when on duty; not attending a fire at night, through not hearing the firebell; being over a quarter of a mile from the station or from home without leave when off duty; being seen speaking to a person in the street, although the person might have been asking a question, and might have been a passenger by steamer or train, and could not be got as a witness at inquiry; being a minute or two late for parade at a quarter to five in the morning; not being properly dressed—that is, wearing a paper collar, having clothes not properly brushed, not being shaved, boots not polished (although they may be wet and will not shine); being a minute or two late going to bed at eleven o'clock; spilling ink on the floor of the office. He knew one instance where a man had been fined 5s. for spilling ink on the office floor. He supposed it was right that there should be some small punishment for these breaches of the regulations; but what he wished to point out was this:

Every one of these little breaches of discipline was entered on the defaulters' sheet, and was there kept against the men as a record for all time; no matter how many years he had been in the service, those little matters were never wiped off: and this was considered a very great grievance among the men. They would consider it a great boon if the regulations were so altered that by a certain number—say, three—of years of good conduct these black marks might be wiped off. Where a constable was transferred from one district to another the sheet went with him. The new Inspector saw these marks, and naturally thought he was not a trustworthy man, and that he would have to have him closely watched. If a man understood that by three years' good conduct he could earn a clean sheet it would be an incentive to him to keep as close to the mark as possible.

Mr. SPEAKER said the honourable gentleman was arguing the question more fully than was allowed in asking a question.

Mr. SEDDON said there was another side to the question. If a constable knew that by three years' good conduct any misconduct he had committed would be taken off his sheet he might possibly be indifferent as to committing an offence, knowing that by three years' good conduct it would be eliminated from the sheet. It might surprise the honourable gentleman to know that, after having been Minister of Defence for nearly four years, he had never seen on any defaulters' sheet black marks for any of the offences enumerated by the honourable gentleman. The better course would be to see that only offences of a certain class were placed on the defaulters' sheet. He would go into that phase of the question very carefully. He had, in the case of constables who had been for some years without offence, given them promotion, and found that in doing so a certain amount of injustice was done to constables who were in the city, where they were subject to much closer supervision. It was under consideration whether there ought not, in some cases, to be some allowance as compared with those constables in country districts. He might say that the whole matter was under consideration, with a view to amending the regulations. Power had been given to the Inspectors to enter trivial offences on the sheet which were not brought under the notice of Ministers at all. Each month now the Inspectors had to send the Minister a copy of the sheet, showing the fines inflicted, and for what they had been imposed.

NATIVE RESERVES ADMINISTRATION BILL.

Mr. WILLIS asked the Minister of Lands, Whether it is his intention to introduce this session the Native Reserves Administration Bill that was brought forward too late last session to be dealt with, or a similar measure, in order to deal in the future with large blocks of Native land that are now held at small rents by Europeans? He had reason to suppose that very large blocks of land which were at

present Native reserves were treated for by individuals. For some time past they had held leases of these blocks from the Natives, and, without waiting until the leases were completed, at the period, of, say, eighteen years, had advanced money to the Natives, and put pressure on them to give them a fresh lease before the old one had expired; the consequence being that they got a monopoly of the land—blocks of ten thousand and twenty thousand acres of some of the finest land in the district. This was not peculiar to his district. It was well known that the same thing took place in other districts. The Bill referred to was one in which the late Premier took a very great interest. He well knew of these abuses, and he was the means of introducing that Bill. If this Native-reserves monopoly could be stopped, and the land placed in the hands of the Official Assignee, or a Board, in the same way as the West Coast reserves were dealt with, it would be the means of placing a large number of settlers on the land, and dealing more fairly with the Natives, giving them better rents, whereas at the present time the amount they were receiving for their land was very small; and not only that, but the land was at present taken up by people who owned big blocks, and made use of these very large Native reserves to make their areas larger.

Mr. WARD said the position of the Native reserves at present vested in the Public Trustee would be more satisfactory if authority were given to grant leases perpetually renewed under conditions in which the improvements went to the lessees. The administration of the Native lands not vested in the Public Trustee would require further consideration.

ADJOURNMENT.

Mr. McLACHLAN begged to move the adjournment of the House, and he did so with great reluctance. He desired to make an explanation in reference to the question he had made as to the distribution of Bills. He went to the Bill-room, not knowing how many Bills he was entitled to, and the man in charge told him he could only get two copies. He was not aware that he could get more copies till subsequently. He made this explanation in vindication of his veracity. He would not knowingly make a false statement.

Mr. SPEAKER did not think there was any insinuation to that effect. He would not allow any impeachment of honourable members' veracity. It appeared that the Bills came up in batches, and had to be doled out one by one to members as they called for them, so that each member should get his full supply piecemeal.

Mr. BUCHANAN thought some imputation was made as to "tips" being given to clerks in the Bill-room or something to that effect.

Mr. SPEAKER said he did not recollect to have heard anything of that nature spoken of.

Mr. BUCHANAN thought it was rather unfair that imputations of that kind should be

cast against officers of the House who were unable to defend themselves.

Mr. SPEAKER said he must again repeat that he never heard any imputations made.

Mr. BUCHANAN understood that imputations had been made. One of these officers had been in the Bill-room for the last twelve years, and he thought it was not fair that such an imputation should be cast against him. As to the other officer, he was equally certain he would not do anything unworthy.

Mr. G. J. SMITH said he was much interested in the particular Bill referred to—the Licensing Bill. The Bills came up in batches, and if the officers had not been careful some members would have been without copies. He did not think in this case members had anything to complain of. There was a great demand for copies of the Bill.

Mr. SAUNDERS said he had always been civilly and fairly treated; but he desired to suggest to the Government a course with regard to the distribution of Bills which, he thought, would be more successful than the proposal to give each member an equal number of copies. The member who intended to be useful in that House must not devote his attention to every subject, but must take up only some subjects; consequently there were some members who would be interested in one Bill and some who would be interested in another; and he thought, instead of giving an equal number of copies of every Bill to each member, they should allow every member to have a certain number of extra Bills during the year, and to select what Bills he liked. There were some subjects upon which he, for instance, would like to have a few extra Bills to distribute amongst his constituents, but upon nine subjects out of ten he would not want more than one copy.

Mr. ALLEN hoped the Government would not accept the suggestion which had just been made. Although a member might be interested in a special Bill it was not always the member who had to be considered, but his constituents. Large numbers of members' constituents were often interested in different Bills—one portion of the people interested in one particular Bill, and another portion in another Bill. If a member wanted some extra copies of a Bill he could always go to another member and ask him whether he had any to spare.

Major STEWARD desired to ask the Minister of Defence to put him right in regard to an answer which he had given to a question asked by him that afternoon in reference to the defences of Wellington. He had pointed out that it was necessary that certain lights should be placed so as to cover the mine-field, and he understood the honourable gentleman to reply that that had been provided for already. He was not aware that any estimates had been before the House yet, and he wished to understand clearly whether the honourable gentleman would, when the estimates were brought down, propose the necessary vote.

Mr. SEDDON desired to put the honourable gentleman right. The facts were these: In

connection with the construction and equipment of forts for Wellington Harbour defences, provision had been made for an efficient system of electric lighting for defence purposes. Emplacements and observing-stations for electric lights had been constructed; the necessary steam-power and dynamos for generating electricity, and all requisite appliances for working electric search-lights, *et cetera*, were in position, and in effective working-order at the forts. There was no necessity, therefore, when everything had been done, to spend the £3,000. The Government had made due provision for what the honourable gentleman had alluded to.

Major STEWARD said he would take another opportunity of showing that the honourable gentleman's information was not quite correct.

Mr. SEDDON said the honourable gentleman would certainly not be able to show that the provision referred to had not been made. The apparatus was there placed in position, and it had been paid for.

Mr. W. HUTCHISON desired to bear his testimony to the unvarying attention of the officers who had been referred to, and, indeed, of all the officers of Parliament. He was also very glad to hear what the Premier said about the petty charges made against policemen, and that they were henceforth to have no permanent influence. He thought these officers should receive some consideration, because they had arduous duties to perform.

Mr. DUNCAN wished to bear his testimony to the conduct of the messengers in the Bill-room. He had had the experience of about sixteen sessions, and he had always found them very careful. When important Bills, such as the Licensing Bill and the Railways Bill, were printed provision was generally made for an extra number of copies, but, as had been pointed out, these extra copies were never available on the first day. If members only had a little patience they would be satisfied with regard to the number of copies they received.

Mr. FLATMAN, as a new member, desired to state that he had received every civility from the clerks of the House. He heard the honourable member for Rangitata say he had received eight copies of the Licensing Bill. At that time he had only received one copy himself. He went down and got one more copy that day, but next day his wants were fully supplied. If the clerks had not the Bills they could not give them out.

Mr. O'REGAN would like to add his testimony to the civility and courtesy of the officers of the House. Regarding the question asked about the defence of Wellington, personally he held very strong opinions on the general subject of defence. It was his opinion—and he thought the majority of members would agree with him—that there should be a rigid inquiry made by the House into the defence expenditure. It seemed to him that there was a wanton waste of money in the expenditure of such extravagant sums for defence purposes, while public works remained in abeyance throughout the colony. It simply appeared to

Mr. Buchanan

be spending public funds to provide billets for a number of people who might be better engaged.

Mr. McLACHLAN wished to bear his testimony to the courtesy of the officers. He had never made any complaint as to want of courtesy. It was the system which he found fault with. In regard to the remarks of the honourable member for Wairarapa about the "tip" business, he might say that one honourable member was looking over his file of Bills, when he remarked to the honourable gentleman how nicely they were done—being indexed. The honourable member said he had it done in the Bill-room. He (Mr. McLachlan)

4.0. was not aware that such a thing could be done or he would have had it done from the beginning of the session, and would not begrudge paying for it. If the Government would order it he would pay his share of it, for he did not begrudge the cost if it was done in the men's own time. What he wanted was to improve the method, not to cheapen it.

Motion negatived.

BELLAMY'S.

Mr. McGUIRE explained that he was recorded in *Hansard*, on page 377, as having voted on the division respecting Bellamy's, when, as a matter of fact, he did not vote in that division, and was not present in the House when it was taken. He was therefore surprised that his name was recorded. He thought it was his duty, as soon as the matter was brought under his notice, to call attention to it, in order to put himself right.

MONDAY'S SITTINGS.

Mr. SEDDON moved, That the House meet on Monday evening next, at half-past seven o'clock, for the consideration of local Bills.

The House divided on the question, "That the motion be agreed to."

AYES, 41.

Buddo	Hutchison, W.	Parata
Cadman	Joyce	Pirani
Carncross	Lang	Reeves
Carroll	Larnach	Saunders
Collins	Lawry	Seddon
Crowther	Mackintosh	Smith, G. J.
Duncan	McKenzie, J.	Stevens
Earnshaw	McLachlan	Steward
Flatman	McNab	Tanner
Guinness	Millar	Thompson
Hall-Jones	Mills	Willis.
Harris	Montgomery	<i>Tellers.</i>
Hogg	Morrison	Meredith.
Houston	O'Regan	Pinkerton.

NOES, 18.

Bell	Heke	McKenzie, R.
Buchanan	Hutchison, G.	Mitchelson
Buick	Mackenzie, T.	Russell, W. R.
Button	Maslin	<i>Tellers.</i>
Duthie	Massey	Newman
Fraser	McGuire	Wilson.
Green		

Majority for, 23.

Motion agreed to.

FACTORIES BILL.

On the question, That this Bill be read a third time,

Mr. HOUSTON said,—I hope the Minister will take care that this Bill is properly administered. It is a fact that many Bills in administration become very bad Bills indeed. I can mention a case with reference to the Factories Act which came under my notice in Auckland. I refer to the particular factory carried on by Messrs. Clark and Sons. Some time ago the young ladies working in that factory wished to have a remission of the time allowed them for luncheon in order that they might go home an hour earlier on Saturday. A number of them lived a considerable distance out of town, and if they got away at twelve o'clock on Saturday it would enable them to get home in time enough on Saturday to have the whole of the afternoon to themselves. The manager agreed to this; and the thing was working smoothly until some persons brought the matter under the notice of the department, and the result was, the manager of the factory was told he must strictly enforce the law, thus preventing these young ladies having the whole of the afternoon on Saturdays. I think any law passed by this House should not be a law of the Medes and Persians, and that those who have the power of administering the Act should have granted such a concession as this. The course which was taken, however, simply defeated the object for which the Act was passed. I consider this was a very great hardship indeed. I think the department might have granted the concession to these young ladies who were working in Messrs. Clark and Sons' factory, and allowed them to curtail their luncheon-hour on this particular day in order to have the whole of Saturday afternoon to themselves. I hope the Minister will take a note of this matter.

Mr. REEVES.—I will.

Bill read a third time.

SHOPS AND SHOP-ASSISTANTS BILL.

IN COMMITTEE.

Clause 9.—Where several districts have common boundary, conference to decide day.

"Provided that at any such conference the Cities of Wellington, Auckland, Dunedin, and Christchurch shall be entitled to be represented by one-half of the number of delegates constituting such conference, and, when the number of delegates is uneven, then by one-half of the number *plus one*."

Mr. REEVES moved to strike out the words "one-half of the number *plus one*," and substitute "a bare majority of such delegates."

Motion agreed to.

Clause 11.—"A woman, or a person under eighteen years of age, shall not work for hire or maintenance in or about any shop, nor at any work in connection with the shop, for a longer period than fifty-eight hours, including meal-times, in any one week, nor for a longer period than ten hours and a half, including meal-times, in any one day."

"No woman, or person under eighteen years

of age, shall be employed more than five consecutive hours without being granted an interval of not less than half an hour for refreshments.

"A woman, or a person under eighteen years of age, shall not, to the knowledge of the shopkeeper, be employed in any shop who has been previously on the same day employed in a factory or workroom for the number of hours permitted by law, or for a longer period than will complete such number of hours."

Mr. PINKERTON moved to add the words "except on one day in each week, when twelve and a half hours' work may be done."

Motion agreed to.

Clause 14.—Sitting-accommodation for females employed in shops.

Mr. BELL moved to add the following new clause, 14A:—

"No shopkeeper shall—

"(a.) Directly or indirectly prohibit or prevent, or make any rule or regulation prohibiting, any female employed in his shop from being seated when not actually and immediately engaged in the course of her employment;

"(b.) Require any such female to be so continuously employed in an employment the course of which requires her to remain standing as that reasonable intervals are not allowed to her in each day during which she may use the sitting-accommodation provided;

"(c.) Dismiss from his employment or reduce the wages of any female on the ground that she has made use of such sitting-accommodation, unless it be proved that she has used it for an unreasonably long time or an unreasonable number of times on any day.

"Any shopkeeper who shall offend against any provision of this section shall for every such offence be liable to a penalty not exceeding ten pounds."

Motion agreed to.

Mr. EARNSHAW moved the addition of the following new clause:—

"In all cases where, for six months prior to the passing of this Act, any shopkeeper shall have been in the habit of closing his shop on Saturday afternoon, he shall, if he hereafter shall keep his shop closed on Saturday afternoon, be not liable to close his shop on any other afternoon that may be fixed by the City or Borough Council or Town Board for closing under this Act."

The Committee divided on the question, "That the clause be read a second time."

AYES, 21.

Allen	Massey	Russell, W. R.
Bell	Millar	Smith, G. J.
Buchanan	Mitchelson	Tanner
Carncross	Parata	Wilson.
Collins	Pinkerton	<i>Tellers.</i>
Fraser	Pirani	Earnshaw
Heke	Reeves	Mackenzie, T.
Kelly, J. W.		

NOES, 38.

Buddo	Joyce	Mills
Buick	Lang	Montgomery
Button	Larnach	O'Regan
Cadman	Lawry	Saunders
Carroll	Mackintosh	Stevens
Duncan	Maslin	Steward
Flatman	McGowan	Ward
Hall-Jones	McKenzie, R.	Willis.
Harris	McLachlan	<i>Tellers.</i>
Hogg	McNab	Hall
Houston	Meredith	Morrison.
Hutchison, G.		

Majority against, 12.

New clause negatived.

Mr. T. MACKENZIE moved the following new clause:—

"Shop-assistants shall be entitled to one hour for dinner."

The Committee divided.

AYES, 35.

Allen	Heke	Newman
Bell	Hutchison, G.	Pirani
Buchanan	Joyce	Reeves
Buddo	Kelly, J. W.	Russell, W. R.
Buick	Lawry	Smith, G. J.
Button	Maslin	Stevens
Carncross	Massey	Tanner
Collins	McLachlan	Willis
Earnshaw	McNab	Wilson.
Flatman	Millar	<i>Tellers.</i>
Hall-Jones	Mills	Fraser
Harris	Montgomery	Mackenzie, T.

NOES, 15.

Cadman	Mackintosh	Saunders
Duncan	McKenzie, J.	Thompson.
Hall	McKenzie, R.	<i>Tellers.</i>
Hogg	Meredith	Morrison
Houston	O'Regan	Pinkerton.
Lang		

Majority for, 20.

New clause agreed to.

Bill reported, with amendments.

SHIPPING AND SEAMEN'S BILL.

IN COMMITTEE.

First Schedule.

Mr. REEVES moved, That the First Schedule be struck out, with the view of inserting a new schedule.

Amendment agreed to, and schedule struck out.

Mr. REEVES moved, That the new schedule be read a second time.

Amendment agreed to.

Mr. MILLAR moved to strike out the word "square-rigged" before the word "sailing-vessels."

Amendment agreed to, and word struck out.

The Committee divided on the question, "That the schedule as amended stand part of the Bill."

AYES, 42.

Buick	Collins	Duthie
Cadman	Crowther	Earnshaw
Carroll	Duncan	Flatman

Fraser	McGowan	Pinkerton
Green	McGuire	Pirani
Harris	McKenzie, J.	Reeves
Hogg	McKenzie, R.	Saunders
Houston	McLachlan	Smith, G. J.
Hutchison, G.	Meredith	Steward
Kelly, J. W.	Mills	Thompson
Kelly, W.	Mitchelson	Willis.
Lang	Montgomery	<i>Tellers.</i>
Larnach	Morrison	Millar
Lawry	O'Regan	Stevens.
Mackenzie, T.		

NOES, 11.

Allen	Hall-Jones	Te Ao.
Bell	Hutchison, W.	<i>Tellers.</i>
Buchanan	McNab	Russell, W. R.
Buddo	Tanner	Wilson.

Majority for, 31.

New schedule added to the Bill.

Clause 6.—Number of hands for coastal or intercolonial trade vessels.

Mr. REEVES moved to add to the clause, "Nothing in this clause shall be deemed to affect steamers plying within river limits only."

Mr. THOMPSON moved to also add, after the word "river," the words "and extended river."

The Committee divided on Mr. Thompson's amendment.

AYES, 28.

Allen	Houston	Mitchelson
Buick	Hutchison, G.	Newman
Button	Kelly, W.	Saunders
Carroll	Lang	Te Ao
Crowther	Larnach	Willis
Duncan	Maslin	Wilson.
Fraser	Massey	
Hall-Jones	McGowan	<i>Tellers.</i>
Harris	McNab	Meredith
Heke	Mills	Thompson.

NOES, 23.

Bell	Joyce	Pirani
Buchanan	Kelly, J. W.	Reeves
Buddo	Lawry	Russell, W. R.
Cadman	McKenzie, J.	Smith, G. J.
Collins	McLachlan	Stevens
Earnshaw	Montgomery	Steward.
Flatman	Morrison	
Green	O'Regan	<i>Tellers.</i>
Hogg	Parata	Millar
Hutchison, W.	Pinkerton	Tanner.

PAIR.

For.

Against.

Carncross.

Carnell.

The CHAIRMAN said he would give his casting-vote with the "Noes."

Amendment negatived, and Mr. Reeves's amendment added.

Bill reported, with amendments.

HAWKERS AND PEDLARS BILL.

IN COMMITTEE.

Clause 2.—"Commercial traveller" means and includes every person who is permanently employed by a company or firm of wholesale merchants or traders as a commercial travel-

ling agent for the purpose of receiving orders, making collections, and the like."

Mr. REEVES moved, That the words "receiving orders, making collections, and the like," be struck out, with a view of inserting "selling or seeking orders for goods, wares, or merchandise to or from persons who are dealers therein, and who buy to sell again."

The Committee divided on the question, "That the words proposed to be struck out stand part of the clause."

AYES, 14.

Buddo	McGuire	Thompson
Button	McNab	Wilson.
Duncan	Meredith	<i>Tellers.</i>
Duthie	Parata	Bell
Harris	Smith, G. J.	Buchanan.

NOES, 44.

Allen	Hutchison, G.	Mitchelson
Buick	Hutchison, W.	Montgomery
Cadman	Joyce	Morrison
Carncross	Kelly, J. W.	Newman
Carroll	Kelly, W.	Pinkerton
Collins	Lang	Pirani
Crowther	Larnach	Reeves
Earnshaw	Lawry	Russell, W. R.
Flatman	Mackenzie, T.	Stevens
Fraser	Maslin	Steward
Green	McGowan	Tanner
Hall	McKenzie, R.	Willis.
Hall-Jones	McLachlan	<i>Tellers.</i>
Heke	Millar	Houston
Hogg	Mills	O'Regan.

Majority against, 30.

Words struck out.

Amendment agreed to.

Mr. SEDDON moved to omit the words "'Hawker and pedlar' mean and shall apply to any person who sells, or attempts to sell, or offers for sale goods, wares, or merchandise carried about on the person, or on any animal, or in any movable conveyance, whether by land or water"; with a view of inserting "'Hawker and pedlar' means any person who carries on his person, or on any truck or barrow, or who travels with a horse or other beast bearing or drawing burden, and goes from place to place or to other men's houses carrying to sell or exposing for sale any goods, wares, or merchandise, or exposing samples or patterns of any goods, wares, or merchandise to be afterwards delivered; and includes any person who travels by any means of locomotion to any place in which he does not usually reside or carry on business, and there sells or exposes for sale any goods, wares, or merchandise in or at any house, shop, room, booth, stall, or other place whatever hired or used by him for that purpose."

Amendment agreed to.

Mr. HOUSTON moved to add, after the word "person," the following words: "whether on his own behalf or representing a wholesale or retail house."

The Committee divided on the question, "That the words 'whether on his own behalf' be added to the subclause."

AYES, 38.

Buddo	Hutchison, W.	Montgomery
Cadman	Joyce	Morrison
Carroll	Kelly, J. W.	Parata
Collins	Kelly, W.	Pinkerton
Crowther	Lang	Pirani
Duncan	Larnach	Smith, G. J.
Earnshaw	Lawry	Stevens
Flatman	Maslin	Steward
Hall	McKenzie, R.	Thompson
Hall-Jones	McLachlan	Willis.
Harris	McNab	<i>Tellers.</i>
Hogg	Millar	Carncross
Hutchison, G.	Mills	Houston.

NOES, 14.

Allen	Mackenzie, T.	Tanner
Buchanan	Mackintosh	Wilson.
Buick	McGowan	<i>Tellers.</i>
Button	Meredith	Bell
Fraser	Newman	Green.

PAIRS.

<i>For.</i>	<i>Against.</i>
McKenzie, J.	Mitchelson
Seddon.	Russell, W. R.

Majority for, 24.

Amendment agreed to.

Mr. PIRANI moved to add after "behalf," the words "or on behalf of any other person."

Amendment agreed to.

The Committee divided on the question, "That the words 'or representing a wholesale or retail house' be added."

AYES, 35.

Buick	Hutchison, W.	Mills
Carncross	Joyce	Montgomery
Crowther	Kelly, W.	Morrison
Earnshaw	Lang	Newman
Flatman	Lawry	Parata
Green	Mackintosh	Pinkerton
Hall	Maslin	Reeves
Hall-Jones	McGowan	Tanner
Harris	McKenzie, R.	Thompson.
Hogg	McLachlan	<i>Tellers.</i>
Houston	McNab	Duncan
Hutchison, G.	Millar	Kelly, J. W.

NOES, 15.

Allen	Massey	Willis
Buchanan	Meredith	Wilson.
Button	Pirani	<i>Tellers.</i>
Collins	Smith, G. J.	Fraser
Duthie	Stevens	Mackenzie, T.
Larnach		

Majority for, 20.

Words added.

Dr. NEWMAN moved, That the words "or bicycle" be inserted after the word "barrow."

The Committee divided.

AYES, 9.

Allen	Pirani	<i>Tellers.</i>
Buick	Smith, G. J.	Duncan
Duthie	Tanner.	Newman.
Kelly, J. W.		

NOES, 39.

Buddo	Joyce	Millar
Cadman	Kelly, W.	Mills
Carncross	Lang	Morrison
Collins	Larnach	Parata
Crowther	Lawry	Pinkerton
Earnshaw	Mackenzie, T.	Reeves
Flatman	Mackintosh	Stevens
Green	Maslin	Steward
Hall	Massey	Thompson
Hall-Jones	McGowan	Willis.
Hogg	McKenzie, R.	<i>Tellers.</i>
Houston	McNab	Harris
Hutchison, G.	Meredith	Montgomery.
Hutchison, W.		

PAIRS.

<i>For.</i>	<i>Against.</i>
Mitchelson	McKenzie, J.
Russell, W. R.	Seddon.

Majority against, 30.

Words not inserted.

Clause 3, subsection (1). — Disqualification under six months' residence.

Mr. HOUSTON moved, That the subsection be struck out.

The Committee divided on the question, "That the words proposed to be omitted stand part of the clause."

AYES, 31.

Buddo	Harris	Parata
Cadman	Hogg	Reeves
Carncross	Hutchison, W.	Smith, G. J.
Collins	Kelly, J. W.	Stevens
Crowther	Larnach	Steward
Duncan	Lawry	Tanner
Earnshaw	Maslin	Willis.
Flatman	Millar	
Green	Mills	<i>Tellers.</i>
Hall	Montgomery	Joyce
Hall-Jones	Morrison	Pinkerton.

NOES, 15.

Buick	Massey	Pirani
Button	McGowan	Wilson.
Duthie	McKenzie, R.	<i>Tellers.</i>
Kelly, W.	McNab	Houston
Lang	Meredith	Thompson.
Mackenzie, T.		

PAIRS.

<i>For.</i>	<i>Against.</i>
McKenzie, J.	Mitchelson
Seddon.	Russell, W. R.

Majority for, 16.

Words retained.

Clause 18. — Spirituous liquors not to be carried.

Mr. TANNER moved, That the clause be struck out.

The Committee divided on the question, "That the clause stand part of the Bill."

AYES, 30.

Buddo	Green	Houston
Cadman	Hall	Hutchison, W.
Carncross	Hall-Jones	Kelly, J. W.
Duncan	Harris	Larnach
Earnshaw	Heke	Mackenzie, T.

Maslin	Parata	Stevens
McKenzie, R.	Pirani	Wilson.
McNab	Reeves	<i>Tellers.</i>
Miller	Saunders	Joyce
Montgomery	Smith, G. J.	Mills.
Newman		

NOES, 17.

Allen	Flatman	Morrison
Buchanan	Hogg	Pinkerton
Buick	Kelly, W.	Willis.
Button	Lang	<i>Tellers.</i>
Collins	McGowan	Crowther
Duthie	Meredith	Tanner.

PAIRS.

<i>For.</i>	<i>Against.</i>
McKenzie, J.	Mitchelson
Seddon.	Russell, W. R.

Majority for, 18.

Amendment negatived, and clause retained.
Progress reported.

RATING ON UNIMPROVED VALUE BILL.

11.0. Mr. WARD.—In moving the second reading of this Bill, I may say that I think there is a general desire to have a change in the incidence of local rating. If it is the wish of local bodies in any part of the colony to have the power of levying on the unimproved values instead of according to the present system, it may be done under this Bill. This Bill is to enable local bodies at their option to give effect to rating on the unimproved values of land, or to continue the existing system. I may state that it has been found impossible to specify any fixed increase of rating-power for local authorities rating on the unimproved value, because the proportion of unimproved values to the values including improvements varies so much in the different districts of the colony. For instance, it varies from one-tenth in the case of the Borough of Naseby to twenty-nine thirtieths in the case of the East Taupo County. Naseby Borough, in other words, would require ten times the present rating-power, while East Taupo would only require an extra thirtieth. I would point out to honourable members how difficult it has been to devise a system which will enable local bodies to make the change of rating upon the unimproved value of lands and at the same time obtain under the altered system the same amount of revenue which they had previously obtained. The point is very important, and I may inform the House that it has been an exceedingly difficult problem to solve. However, I believe under this Bill the difficulty has been overcome. I may also say, as it is intended that a special use shall be hereafter made of the value including improvements, I have thought it necessary to adopt a special term—namely, “gross value”—which implies that there must be a “net value,” which will represent what is to be known as the unimproved value. Now, it is well to let the House understand that “gross value” is identical with the name or term “capital value” used in “The Rating Act, 1882,” and the Rating Bill of 1894,

and all Acts which may confer rating-power on capital value. I may say the problem is solved for local authorities whose rating-power is expressed in the term “capital value” something on these lines: In the case of a district the property in which under the capital value is valued at £90,000, and the value of improvements is £30,000, and the unimproved value £60,000,—I hope I may make myself clear on this point to honourable members,—the rating-power of $\frac{1}{3}$ d. in the pound upon the capital value becomes a rating-power of $\frac{1}{3}$ d. on the gross value, £90,000, and the rating-power on the unimproved value is found in accordance with a simple rule. I wish to explain to the House how this system will work out, and I propose to indicate how it is intended to prevent the clerks of local bodies making a mistake so far as this system is concerned, under a provision in the Bill requiring them to forward their valuations to the Commissioner of Taxes, in whose department the actual rate will be worked out and furnished to the local body. With a departure such as this it is very important there should be no possibility of irregularity in working the system under the change in the different towns or in different districts of the colony. Under this Bill there can be no doubt, if the system is adopted by the House, that these local bodies will be able to have an assimilation of system from one end of New Zealand to the other, and that no injustice under the proposal now submitted can be done to any individual in any part of the colony. There is a specimen attached to the Bill of the way in which the rate upon the gross value—that is, by the substitution of $\frac{1}{3}$ d. in the pound as against 1s. in the pound—is arrived at; and I will give the House an example of it. Take a case of a district with property valued at £90,000, the value of the improvements on which is £30,000, and the unimproved value £60,000. The rating-power of $\frac{1}{3}$ d. in the pound on the gross value would provide a sum of £281 5s. How is the local body to arrive at that sum of money on the unimproved value? By a simple equation in algebra the exact charge can be arrived at so as to bring out precisely the same amount on the remaining £60,000, which is the unimproved value. Under the proposed system the rate would be $1\frac{1}{3}$ d., which would produce £281 5s., so that the local body, under the new system, would obtain precisely the same amount as formerly. One of the objections urged against this change, when this important matter was before this House last year, was the difficulty of obtaining the same revenue and with a uniformity of system, and I may say that under the then-proposed system many anomalies in the rating-powers of local bodies would have arisen, and in many instances their revenues would have been most seriously diminished. This cannot now happen, and I may say that during the recess much consideration was given to this subject, in order to prevent anomalous and varying results from arising. Then, again, we should have cases in

many parts of New Zealand of properties of the same gross value, but of different values of improvements, bringing out very different results. The aim under the proposed system is that, in the case of property largely improved, the owner should feel the strain of taxation to a lesser extent than a person holding an idle property or one which is unimproved. I will place another instance before you in order to show how this will be effected. I take two properties, the gross value of which in one case is £45,000, the improvements being valued at £25,000, and the unimproved value being £20,000; in the other case, with the same gross value, £45,000, the improvements on the property are valued at £5,000, and the unimproved value is £40,000. Now, a rate of 1½d. in the pound on the unimproved value would, in the case of the highly-improved property, the improvements on which were valued at £25,000, require that the ratepayer should pay under this system £93 15s., while the owner of the property the unimproved value of which was £40,000 would have to pay £187 10s. That is the difference under this system, showing very distinctly that the ratepayer with least improvements would have to contribute upon his property, in consequence of the difference of improvements I have named, double what the man who has large improvements on his property would contribute. Some of the local bodies that have taken exception to the change have expressed the fear that they will not be able to raise the same revenue. I desire to explain to the House that, beyond all question, the equivalent rate to levy can be found to a fraction which will produce precisely the same revenue. Therefore there cannot be the same objection now to changing the system from levying upon the improved values to levying upon the unimproved values as formerly existed. It is provided that the Commissioner of Taxes is required, under "The Local Bodies' Finance and Powers Act, 1885," to certify that the rate does not exceed the legal limit before the subsidy is paid by the Government, and it is therefore necessary for the department to have these values. The system of assessment in that department, as honourable members know, is now completely changed. It is not intended to have local valuations as they formerly existed in this colony. The valuations of the local bodies will be of great service to the department, and therefore it is necessary that these valuations should be sent to the Tax Commissioner, and his certificate will require to be attached before any subsidy is contributed by the Government. I may state, for the information of the House, that what I regard as the critical clause in this Bill is section 11, and to which I desire to call the attention of honourable members. If honourable members will look at that clause they will find that, for the first time in rating by local bodies, a distinction has been made between imposing a rate and levying a rate. It is provided that all rates are to be imposed by the local authorities on the gross value of the property in the district, but they are to be levied

Mr. Ward

by a rate on the unimproved value equivalent in its producing capacity, as authorised by a certificate of the Commissioner of Taxes. Now, that means that, while the local body may impose the rate, after having imposed it they then submit the matter to the Commissioner of Taxes, and he specifies the rate which may be levied under the system which I have stated to the House, by working out what the equivalent rate would be which is necessary in order to produce the same revenue that they got under the former rate, and, having worked that out, he furnishes it to the local body, and the local body rates accordingly. I may say that the Chairman of a local body, as will be seen from the clause, in imposing the rate has to make a declaration embodying the facts of the case, and from the data he furnishes the Commissioner estimates the equivalent rate on the unimproved value, and authorises the same.

An Hon. MEMBER.—That is clause 12.

Mr. WARD.—Clauses 11 and 12. There are two special provisions in the Bill that I wish to direct the attention of honourable members to. I think, as water and gas rates are levied for the exclusive benefit of buildings, that these should be exceptional rates, and be levied on the gross value, and not on the unimproved value; and, in a case where judgment is given for rates, I think it is desirable, as we are now changing the system of taxation, and giving the option to have it put on the unimproved value, that the buildings and the property as well as the land itself should be held responsible for the payment of the rates. There may be cases where improvements are made on the land even where it is not built on; and special provision is taken in this Bill to insure that, in case of default, the buildings on the property, or the improvements on the land, are to be held responsible for the payment of those rates. I think I have touched upon the chief features in this Bill. They are very few. In the first place, it is intended to change the system from charging upon the capital value to charging upon the unimproved value. This change is provided for by the system which I have indicated to the House. The local authority proposing to rate communicates with the Tax Commissioner, and the Tax Commissioner specifies the rate necessary to produce the same revenue. The chief change is that of levying upon the unimproved value. The Government recognises, and I think, as a matter of fact, most honourable members do, that it is desirable, in the interests of the local bodies, that they should have the power, if they so wish, to levy rates upon the unimproved value. If there are any points in the Bill that I have not made clear I shall be only too glad to explain them in reply to honourable members.

Debate adjourned.

The House adjourned at a quarter to twelve o'clock p.m.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.

Monday, 27th August, 1894.

Second Readings—Third Readings—Riverton Harbour Board Empowering Bill—Onahunga Cemetery Bill—Gisborne Harbour Bill—Eketahuna Cemetery Reserve Bill—Dunedin Loan Conversion Bill—Gisborne Harbour Bill—Adjournment.

Mr. SPEAKER took the chair at half-past seven o'clock.

PRAYERS.

SECOND READINGS.

Kaitangata Relief Fund Transfer Bill, Hamilton Domains Empowering Bill, Borough of Oamaru Leasing Bill, Auckland Harbour Board Empowering Bill, Mount St. John Reserve Bill, Wellington Reclaimed Land Bill.

THIRD READINGS.

Greymouth Harbour Board Empowering Bill, Waimakariri Water-supply Board Loan Bill, Newmarket Hall Bill, Inangahua County Council Empowering Bill, Kaitangata Relief Fund Transfer Bill, Hamilton Domains Empowering Bill, Borough of Oamaru Leasing Bill, Auckland Harbour Board Empowering Bill, Mount St. John Reserve Bill, Wellington Reclaimed Land Bill.

RIVERTON HARBOUR BOARD EM-
POWERING BILL.

INTERRUPTED DEBATE.

Mr. ALLEN thought he had said nearly all he intended to say with reference to the third reading of this Bill when he last addressed the House. He hoped the House would really consider what it was doing in putting this Bill through its third reading. He had hoped when it was put through its first reading that they would not give it a second; when it had passed its second reading he hoped they were going to kill it in Committee; and now they had come to the third reading he hoped they were at the killing stage. It was of no use to send it to another place, because, in view of the merits of the Bill, they knew how another place would deal with it: and this Bill had very little merit, so that there was not much probability of its becoming law. He thought it was best that it should receive what it deserved—a quick despatch at the hands of the House. The Premier said that a great deal of money had been wasted over this measure. No one was responsible for a greater waste of money over it than the Premier himself. In order to please a supporter the Premier had strongly supported the Bill. He could not say the Premier had done so against his own conscience and convictions. He would leave that to those who knew better what his conscience and convictions were. The Bill had really no merits whatever. The honourable gentleman in charge of it looked at him with an incredulous smile, but he must repeat that he could find no merit in the Bill. He did not think the honourable gentleman had explained it to

the House. Two years ago the Bill had been explained on its second reading, but on its second reading the other evening not a word was said; and yet the Bill was passed. He was not aware that it needed any explaining, for it really explained itself. It was one of those dangerous measures which sometimes got on the statute-book, and which led the colony into endless disaster. They had a sample of this kind of legislation in what had taken place in regard to the East and West Coast Railway. What looked like a very simple Bill passing into law was really the commencement of a serious colonial difficulty, which difficulty existed at the present time. Year after year it cropped up—they had not been able to solve it: and it might be that a simple clause like that in this Bill would also lead the colony into very troublesome times. He would not like to see the colony asked to come to the help of the Riverton Harbour Board syndicate to the extent of £618,000, or to anything like such an amount; yet that was their experience with regard to the East and West Coast Railway, and that did not recount the whole experience. He hoped the House would nip this in the bud, or possibly the fruit might be of a somewhat similar type to that of the Act of 1885. He hoped the honourable gentleman in charge of the Bill would give gentlemen opposing it credit for sincerity of opinion. It was not the honourable gentleman they were opposing, but the Bill on its merits, because they did not believe in it and they thought they ought not to pass it. They felt that they ought not to allow the colony to be launched into a sea of difficulty and trouble which previous experience had shown them it was possible to be launched into by passing what looked at this stage to be a somewhat harmless Bill. He hoped that they would now vote on the third reading, and treat the Bill as it ought to be treated.

The House divided on the question, "That the word 'now' stand part of the question."

AYES, 24.

Buddo	Harris	Mills
Cadman	Heke	Morrison
Carncross	Hutchison, W.	Pinkerton
Carnell	Mackintosh	Seddon
Carroll	McGowan	Steward.
Duncan	McKenzie, J.	<i>Tellers.</i>
Graham	McKenzie, R.	Buick
Guinness	Millar	O'Regan.
Hall		

NOES, 15.

Collins	McNab	Tanner
Crowther	Mitchelson	Te Ao.
Duthie	Newman	<i>Tellers:</i>
Earnshaw	Saunders	Allen
Fraser	Smith, G. J.	Bell.
Lang		

PAIRS.

<i>For.</i>	<i>Against.</i>
Flatman	Green
Kelly, J. W.	Maslin
McLachlan	Massoy

Pirani	Thompson
Stevens	Buchanan
Ward.	Russell, W. R.

Majority for, 9.

Amendment negatived, and Bill read a third time.

ONEHUNGA CEMETERY BILL.

IN COMMITTEE.

Mr. TANNER moved, That the Chairman do now leave the chair.

The Committee divided.

AYES, 22.

Bell	Hutchison, G.	Montgomery
Button	Kelly, J. W.	Pinkerton
Cadman	Lang	Smith, G. J.
Crowther	Lawry	Tanner.
Duthie	Maackenzie, T.	
Earnshaw	McKenzie, R.	Tellers.
Harris	McNab	Massey
Heke	Mitchelson	Thompson.

NOES, 11.

Carnell	Joyce	Ward.
Hall-Jones	Mills	Tellers.
Hogg	O'Regan	Graham
Hutchison, W.	O'Rorke	Pirani.

PAIRS.

For.	Against.
Allen	Larnach
Buchanan	Morrison
Buddo	Stout
Collins	Mackintosh
Fraser	Millar
Green	Buick
Newman	McGuire
Pere	Carroll
Russell, W. R.	Stevens
Te Ao.	Seddon.

Majority for, 11.

Motion agreed to.

GISBORNE HARBOUR BILL.

Mr. CARROLL, in moving the second reading of this Bill, said he would not take up the time of the House, because this Bill did not propose to empower the Board to borrow any money, but was for the purpose of affording just relief to the Harbour Board of Gisborne. Some years ago they borrowed £200,000 for the purpose of constructing a breakwater. This amount they borrowed at 5 per cent. Subsequent legislation authorised them to expend out of this £200,000 a sum of £45,000 and a sum of £60,000. The balance it was thought desirable to place in the hands of the Public Trustee to invest on behalf of the Board. To make a long story short, under the amending Act of 1890 the Public Trustee was empowered to invest the money either in real or in Government securities, or on fixed deposit in any banking institution operating in the colony. The consequence was that the Public Trustee, acting under the powers vested in him, invested this money on behalf of the Board at a rate of interest $\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. lower than that which the Board had to pay to the debenture-

holders. Thus the whole community was sustaining a loss of $\frac{1}{2}$ per cent., which, together with fees and commissions, made their burden an exceedingly heavy one. That was their grievance. This Bill was for the purpose of compelling the Public Trustee to "repay to the funds all moneys heretofore invested by him out of the funds, save and except such portions thereof respectively as may for the time being be invested in real securities." He might tell the House that to make up the loss they had to levy a special rate over the harbour district. What they asked now was that the money should be so dealt with by the Public Trustee, or by some one else under authority of the Government, that it might be invested in real security, or in some other form of approved investment, at a rate of interest not lower than that which they had to pay to the debenture-holders. This was what the Bill asked, and it was fair and just. The other object of the Bill was to postpone the date at which they had to discharge certain liabilities which were due by them in consequence of an overdraft account with which they had been favoured at a time of pressing necessity. The amending Act of 1887 provided that that liability should be paid off by the Board out of the Loan Account in yearly payments up to 1895. Owing to the difficulties they had had to contend with, it was found that they would be better able to meet their engagements if this time was further postponed, and they asked to further postpone it until the year 1902. When the Bill went into Committee he would be happy to afford all the information required in detail.

Mr. BELL wished to call the attention of the Colonial Treasurer to this Bill. It was a very interesting measure. Honourable members had not been quite informed by the honourable member in charge of the Bill of the actual reason which had compelled him to come to the House. The reason was that the Public Trustee and his honourable friend had been upon the highway since the year 1891 with, as he had said the other night, masks upon their faces. He congratulated the Colonial Treasurer the other day on the fact that he had removed the mask and was figuring now as a highway robber without any disguise. It was a most serious thing. Parliament hardly understood the great wrong that it had done to a number of poor people. This rich body, which had got £100,000 in the hands of the Public Trustee, was to get relief at the hands of the House; but the people who had small properties and small incomes, who could not afford the loss, were now suffering. If the Gisborne Harbour Board was to be relieved—and he hoped the House would give it relief—he trusted the Colonial Treasurer would see that justice should also be done to poor people from whom the Public Trustee was now taking shillings and pence to fill the Colonial Treasury. That was what was being done. The Public Trustee had received from time to time moneys to be invested, and principally small sums—to a very great extent he was possessed of small sums which people who had died left

to him to be invested in the best way, the income to go to their children. He knew several families who were dependent on the income which was derived from the funds in the hands of the Public Trustee. These people had been getting 7 or 8 per cent. in some cases from the investment of these funds in the hands of the Public Trustee—7½ per cent. was not uncommon in 1891. At that time the Gisborne Harbour Board had its funds in the hands of the Public Trustee, and they were perfectly content, because the Trustee was investing this money at a rate which gave them a considerable profit over what they paid to the debenture-holders. But the Parliament of 1891 declared that the whole of the money in the hands of the Public Trustee as the capital of trust estates should form what it pleased them to call "a common fund"—receiving the guarantee of the colony, it was true; but they never gave to the people any option to take the money out of the hands of the Public Trustee. Parliament, in the Act of 1891, declared that not more than 5 per cent. should be paid, and on sums over £3,000 not more than 4 per cent. was to be paid. So long as Gisborne was represented by a gentleman who was not a member of the Government it had to suffer, but now that it was represented by a member of the Government he brought down this measure, which enabled the Board to take out of the hands of the Public Trustee £100,000, on which the Public Trustee was now paying only 4 per cent., whereas he had it invested at from 5 per cent. to 5½ per cent.—the colony had simply seized the difference. That was very good; it was quite right that the Gisborne funds should be taken out of the hands of the Public Trust

930. Office. He asked the House now to do similar justice to the poor people. If the Colonial Treasurer would only look into the matter he would know that he (Mr. Bell) was not exaggerating—that there were people who could ill afford to have their interest reduced in this way, and the amending Act the Colonial Treasurer was bringing before the House this session was simply legalised robbery. These people had been robbed of the difference between 7 per cent. and 5 per cent.; in some cases, he believed, it was the difference between 7 per cent. and 4 per cent. They had not been offered the option of exchanging the guarantee of the colony for the rights which they had received when they put their money into the Public Trust Office. The Government said, "We are going to pay you out for having put your money there by simply appropriating the difference between the amount we are making and the 5 per cent." This present case of the Gisborne Harbour Board was a very good illustration of the suffering and wrong which could be inflicted, and he therefore had felt it his duty to call the attention of the House to it.

Mr. WARD said his honourable friend had been rather unfortunate in alluding to the charge he had made against the Government the other evening. He had then accused the Government of having taken the funds of the

Public Trust Office for the purpose of obtaining money for carrying on the government of the country by strengthening the investments in the Treasury. Since then, he (Mr. Ward) had taken the trouble of ascertaining how long it had been since the Government had got any money from the Public Trust Office for the purposes of Government, and he would tell honourable members that they had not had any money from the Public Trust Office for the last thirteen months. Therefore that was not a fair accusation to bring against them.

Mr. BELL.—The Government Insurance.

Mr. WARD said that, with regard to the Government Insurance, the honourable gentleman had made a similar statement in reference to the investment of funds with the Wanganui Municipal Corporation. As a matter of fact, upon that occasion he had authorised the investment of £20,000 with the Wanganui Municipal Corporation. They wanted £55,000, but that was a very large investment in one sum upon one security for the colony to make; consequently they offered the Corporation £20,000. With reference to the case of the Gisborne Harbour Board, the position was, that that Board had obtained a loan upon which they paid 5 per cent. It was well known that they had been unfortunate with the harbour-works carried out at Gisborne; and, as a matter of fact, the time arrived when it was considered undesirable to go on spending the loan for the purpose for which it was raised, and the Board could not obtain suitable investment for the money they had in hand. The Public Trustee was referred to to obtain an investment for the balance of the loan, and it was perfectly correct that the Public Trust Office had invested the balance of the loan at ½ per cent. less than the Harbour Board were paying for it. The honourable member who represented Gisborne was quite right in coming to the House on behalf of the Gisborne people, and asking it to give that relief which was necessary in the interests of the Gisborne people; and he might say that the Government did not object to relief being extended to them. He would further point out to the House the undesirability, in connection with this legislation, of having the Public Trustee a co-partner with the Board in connection with the investment of the money. The Government did propose to insert an amendment in the Bill to insure the responsibility being taken away from the Public Trustee, who could not be held responsible for the investment recommended to him by a Board or by anybody in Gisborne. If the office had to be responsible for the investment and control of these funds, he thought it was desirable to relieve the Public Trustee from what he regarded as an improper position for him as a trustee to remain in. The argument of his honourable friend clearly showed that he was in antagonism to the Public Trust, and they must accept that position. The honourable gentleman held that the Public Trust Office was not a desirable institution to conduct the business of deceased persons, on the ground that the moneys were not so profitably invested as

they might be. That was a fair contention for any one in that House to use; but the honourable member lost sight of the main fact, that, with the guarantee of the State at their back, investors must necessarily expect the option of a lower rate of interest for the moneys invested outside by the Public Trustee. It was not a fair argument to say that the Government, in connection with the Public Trust Office, had acted in the capacity of highway robbers, and had endeavoured to collar funds from the Public Trust Office. The facts were against him. What had been the position when the legislation of 1891 was put through the House? Honourable members knew that large losses had taken place in connection with the Public Trust Office. It had been paying high rates of interest, and was making losses, probably, as the result of paying the high rates of interest, which it was not desirable the Public Trust Office should be called upon to pay in trust estates. Necessarily, if a person wanted investments in good securities, he would have to take a lower rate of interest. It must be admitted that in conducting a big institution like the Public Trust Office they could not make fowl of one and flesh of another. That office had to be controlled in a general and systematic manner, and he held a different opinion from that possibly held by his honourable friend—that it was not being controlled in a practical manner. It was a growing department, and a difficult department to manage, and any one who was conducting the office faithfully was bound, to a certain extent, to have vigorous opponents; but the general public, who knew the full usefulness of the institution, would continue, week by week and year by year, to more generally utilise the advantages offered by the institution. As his honourable friend had taken the opportunity, in connection with the Gisborne Harbour Board, of again stating that the Government had taken the funds of the Public Trust Office in order to obtain money, he would give him the assurance that the Government had not had any money from the Public Trust Office for the last thirteen months.

Mr. BELL.—You are taking the difference in interest.

Mr. WARD thought if they had to depend upon the difference in the interest for carrying on the financial operations of the colony it would be admitted that it would be a very bad lookout. He had only to say that his honourable friend in charge of the Bill would receive the assistance of the Government in amending the Bill so as to make it conform to the reasonable requirements of the Public Trust Office, and it would be his business in Committee to point out in what direction that should be done.

Mr. THOMPSON understood that the Bill had been introduced to enable the Gisborne people to secure a higher rate of interest, but he failed to see how the Bill was going to do that. They had been told by the honourable member who introduced the Bill that the Gisborne people were losing $\frac{1}{2}$ per

cent. on this money; and, of course, that was a very serious matter, if they had to make it up by local taxation. It had not been made clear to the House how the passing of the Bill was going to raise the rate of interest. The Colonial Treasurer had explained—but he (Mr. Thompson) had not been very well satisfied with the explanation—that when the Bill was passing through Committee he intended to propose an amendment relieving the Public Trustee from all responsibility in connection with the reinvestment of the money. He thought that was a very serious step to take. The State was responsible for the interest on this loan, and so long as the State was responsible for the interest it should keep in its hands the control and investment of the money. He ventured to say, from the information he received three years ago when a Bill was before the House, that, in reference to the management of the Board, the Gisborne Harbour Board was not a body that ought to be trusted with the investment of the money. No doubt the Board might find investment for the money at a large rate of interest, but he doubted very much the security that would be given. Their eagerness to reinvest the money at a higher rate of interest would probably lead them to make very bad investments, and the result would be that large sums of money would be lost; and by-and-by the bondholders would come upon the State for their money. Whatever alteration was made, if it were decided by the Government that the Public Trustee should be relieved from all responsibility, he hoped that the Government would appoint some other responsible officer who would be responsible to the Government for the reinvestment of the money. He did not think that the honourable member who represented the district was prepared to recommend that the money should be placed entirely at the disposal of the Gisborne Harbour Board. Whatever was done in Committee, he hoped, if the Colonial Treasurer moved to relieve the Public Trustee from all control of the money, that some other responsible officer would be appointed by the Government to see that safe investments were obtained. If that were not done he ventured to say that before many years the money would disappear.

Dr. NEWMAN said it had been suggested to him that the matter could be done better than by legislation as embodied in this Bill if the Agent-General were wired to to buy all the bonds of the Harbour Board. He understood the debentures were considerably below par—say, 10 or 15 per cent. below par—and if they were bought at that rate they would be able to efface a considerable amount of debt, and that would be a satisfactory solution; whereas if this money were lent out on mortgage—

Mr. WARD said they might have to take the money out of the Consolidated Fund to do it.

Dr. NEWMAN said, at any rate it would be an actual abolition of the debt, whereas if the money were lent out on mortgage the debt would still continue.

Mr. CARROLL wished to say a word or two

— Mr. Ward

in reply, more especially to the honourable member for Marsden. He need not remind the honourable gentleman that it was no wish on his part, any more than of the large section of the community directly affected by this Bill, to allow the Harbour Board of Gisborne to have the sole control of these moneys. In fact, he had wished to bring the Public Trustee into this Bill: but his colleague the Colonial Treasurer told him the Public Trustee had great diffidence indeed in occupying the position this Bill would place him in, and would rather be relieved from this position. Upon that he agreed that some other responsible person should be appointed instead, so long as sufficient guarantee could be offered to them and to the House that the funds would be disposed of for the benefit of those directly interested, and also with safety to the colony. He did think the people of Gisborne had a right to complain of the way in which they had been treated in the past. They should not have been placed, or be allowed to remain, in the position of having to pay 5 per cent. to the debenture-holders and of only getting $4\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. for their money.

Bill read a second time.

EKETAHUNA CEMETERY RESERVE BILL.

Mr. HOGG said the object of this Bill was to change the purpose of a reserve from a recreation to a cemetery reserve. It appeared that a portion of the Eketahuna Cemetery was fully occupied. It was found to be utterly unsuitable for the purpose, being situated in a swamp. In the summer-time the graves were frequently filled with water, and there were not sufficient funds to allow the cemetery trustees to drain it. On the 14th August, 1893, a public meeting was held in Eketahuna, which was attended by the cemetery trustees and by a considerable number of residents. At that meeting it was unanimously resolved that every effort should be made to obtain this recreation reserve for the purpose of a cemetery. Within the last few days a document had been placed in his hands, signed by a number of leading residents of Eketahuna, stating that they wished this reserve to be altered to the purpose proposed in this Bill. This document had been sent to him in consequence of a doubt having been thrown upon the fact that the people of Eketahuna really approved of the alteration proposed. He believed the measure received the unanimous support of the people of Eketahuna.

Mr. BELL said it was thought, when the Bill was before the Local Bills Committee, that evidence should be obtained that the public desired to have this recreation reserve changed to a cemetery. He did not know whether it was right, without a good deal more evidence than the mere statement of the honourable gentleman who introduced the Bill, to pass the measure; though, of course, he accepted the honourable gentleman's statement as accurate so far as he was personally concerned. He himself would give his voice

against the second reading, although he would not offer any factious opposition to the Bill. He thought it was very wrong to change the purpose of any recreation reserve to that of a

100. cemetery. If a borough or a district wanted a cemetery it should buy one, and not attempt to deal with a recreation reserve for the purpose.

Mr. HOGG said all he could say with regard to this was that the document he held, was a statement signed by the chairman of the Cemetery Trust, who was also chairman of the public meeting—Mr. Thomas Bayliss; the Chairman of the Eketahuna Road Board; a local Justice of the Peace, the Clerk of the Road Board, the clergyman at Eketahuna, and the leading business residents there. Their signatures were obtained within an hour or two, and he was satisfied, from his own knowledge of the circumstances, that it was the unanimous wish of the residents that this alteration should be effected.

Bill read a second time.

DUNEDIN LOAN CONVERSION BILL.

Mr. PINKERTON said the object of this Bill was to reduce the rate of interest on certain loans which had been raised a number of years ago. Dunedin, like other districts, had been forced into the money-market, and was now paying a very large amount of interest upon its loans. It was desired to convert some of these loans, so as to get the money at a lower rate. Upon some of the loans they were now paying as much as 7 per cent., with 1 per cent. sinking fund, and it was believed the money could be obtained for $4\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. This would considerably relieve the City of Dunedin. At the same time it would set free an amount of sinking fund; but it was not proposed to use this sinking fund for other purposes than the reduction of debt. It was proposed to use it in this way: Say, £65,000 was released, £43,000 would be used to pay off the bank overdraft, and the overdraft in accordance with the provisions of this Bill would not be renewed, so that it was actually paying off a permanent debt. The remainder would then be paid to Commissioners as a nucleus of a sinking fund for the converted loans, and during their currency of thirty or forty years would go very near to wiping off the converted debt; so that, while the present citizens would receive great relief, no burden would be thrown on posterity, and no injustice done to any one. He did not think he need make a speech on the question, but would say that the Bill had received great attention when before the Local Bills Committee, which had gone thoroughly into it, and he believed the members of the Committee were satisfied that the Bill was a desirable one. He would now move, That the Bill be read a second time.

Mr. SEDDON thought it was necessary, when a Bill of such importance as this was before the House, that he should inform honourable members what was really the scope of the measure and as to the amounts involved,

The Bill was on the lines laid down with regard to loan-conversions by the Government: at least, it followed very closely upon the lines of the Act for loan-conversions. There was a considerable amount of sinking fund attached to the loans which were to be dealt with. As to the manner of dealing with the accrued sinking fund, he did not think exception could be taken to that. There would be a reduction in the rate of interest paid, and a very considerable reduction. It had been placed before the Government that this reduction in the rate of interest was necessary, seeing that the financial position of the borough had been detrimentally affected by the interest charges for some time past. The proposal would relieve them from the payment of interest to the extent of £2,000 or £3,000 a year, and they believed they were entitled to the relief sought by the Bill. This was the introduction of the first Bill of its kind, but he had no doubt it would be followed by others, and it was as well the House should know what they were doing in respect to it. So far as the Bill was concerned, the people of Dunedin had made out a very good case. He thought the total amount involved was about a quarter of a million. There would be an increase in the gross debt, and something would be left to posterity which under the original loans would have been paid by means of the sinking fund, as fixed by the law as it now stood. He should not himself oppose the Bill, because it would give relief, and was going in the right direction. The only question was, whether or not it should be done by each district coming before the House with a Bill, or whether there should not be a general measure giving power for this to be done by the local authorities generally. He spoke so that hereafter it might not be said that on the second reading of the Bill the Government had remained silent, and had not made themselves acquainted with the scope of the measure.

Bill read a second and a third time.

GISBORNE HARBOUR BILL.

IN COMMITTEE.

Clause 4.—“Immediately after the coming into operation of this Act, the Public Trustee shall repay to the funds all moneys heretofore invested by him out of the funds, save and except such portions thereof respectively as may for the time being be invested in real securities.”

Mr. WARD moved to strike out the word “Immediately,” and to insert, in lieu thereof, “As soon as may be convenient.”

Amendment agreed to.

Mr. WARD moved the insertion of the following words after the word “shall”: “pay over the funds to the Colonial Treasurer; and the Colonial Treasurer shall.”

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 5.—“Section eight of ‘The Gisborne Harbour Act 1884 Amendment Act, 1888,’ and section nine of ‘The Gisborne Harbour Act 1884 Amendment Act, 1890,’ are hereby repealed, and the following inserted in lieu thereof:—

Mr. Seddon

“The Public Trustee shall henceforth invest the funds, and such portions thereof as may from time to time be available for investment by him, in such manner and in such securities in the Colony of New Zealand as shall be hereafter recommended to him by the Board and approved of by the Governor in Council; but no investment upon mortgage shall be made unless the security is of a value double the sum to be invested thereon. With respect to the proceeds of the sum of twenty-five thousand pounds heretofore set apart as a sinking fund, and any other moneys belonging to such fund, such proceeds shall hereafter be added to and form part of the sinking funds of the loan. The proceeds of the funds, other than sinking funds, shall be applied by the Public Trustee in the same manner and for the same purposes provided for in the said Acts.”

Mr. WARD moved the substitution of “may” for “shall,” after the words “Public Trustee.”

Amendment agreed to.

Mr. WARD moved the insertion of the following words after “Governor in Council”: “The Colonial Treasurer may refuse to invest as so recommended, and in no case shall the colony be held responsible for the investment so made.”

Amendment agreed to.

Mr. WARD moved the substitution of “Colonial Treasurer” for “Public Trustee” in the last sentence of the clause.

Amendment agreed to.

Bill reported, and read a third time.

ADJOURNMENT.

Mr. SEDDON rose to move the adjournment of the House, and would take the opportunity of again complimenting the House on the business that had been transacted. He also took the opportunity of complimenting his honourable friends on the other side on having come to the conclusion that loan-conversion was not borrowing, for they had agreed to a conversion of nearly £300,000 without the slightest demur.

Mr. G. HUTCHISON said there was a considerable distinction between the conversion proposed by the Borough of Dunedin and that lately put in practice by the Government. The difference was that, while in the former case the sinking funds were to be applied in reducing debt, in the case of the Government the sinking funds had been “collared” and spent, with the result that the public indebtedness had been increased.

Mr. BELL might explain that the Local Bills Committee, under the guidance of the honourable gentleman's own colleague, had come to the conclusion that this conversion was borrowing, and, under the guidance of his colleague, as he (Mr. Bell) understood, in his representative capacity as a member of the Government, insisted that all the money released should be applied in payment of debt. Therefore they might congratulate the honour-

able gentleman and his colleagues on their conversion to true principles of finance.

11.0. Mr. T. MACKENZIE said the Premier, unfortunately, did not attend the meeting of the Local Bills Committee; otherwise he would have realised that his colleague rather regarded it as a system of sly borrowing, like that which had been carried on under the system of conversions effected by the present Ministry, and the honourable member pointed out that it would be injurious if this pernicious system were permitted to extend to local bodies' conversions. It would be recognised that the Hon. the Premier had placed himself rather in a corner by casting a reflection on the Opposition side of the House.

Mr. REEVES said it was quite true that, in the interests of sound finance, he did succeed in getting certain amendments introduced into the scheme—which he might term the very able and brilliant scheme—that came up from Dunedin. These amendments were decided improvements. It was only fair, however, to state, as to what passed in Committee, that in regard to those amendments he was supported by the members of the Ministerial party on the Committee, and his action was in dead opposition to the gentlemen of the Opposition on the Committee. He might add that after the amendments were carried a legal gentleman of considerable skill kindly gave them the benefit of his skill in this matter. He did direct attention to one portion of the conversion, which was in some respects in dead opposition to the conversion operations—he referred to the loan which matured in 1896—and he certainly did think it was a startling departure to convert a loan which matured within four years of the date at which they were going to convert.

Mr. CROWTHER sincerely hoped that the Dunedin City Council would be more successful in this conversion than the General Government were. It was his experience that all conversions amounted to borrowing. There was no doubt that whatever money was sunk to secure the conversion it must be added to the debt. That must follow as night followed day, because people were not going to surrender their 6- and 7-per cents for 4½-per cents without some equivalent to induce them to surrender. That question arose in connection with the Auckland Harbour Board, and they found that the terms were such that they could not submit to them. With regard to the Dunedin Bill, they did not know how that matter would turn out, and whether it would be successful. He trusted they would take the same steps which were taken in Auckland—that was, if the terms were not acceptable, that they would reject them, and subsequently see whether, in consequence of the very liberal measures which the Government were bringing in, they could not induce the Government to take the matter up.

Mr. PINKERTON was deeply indebted to the members of the Local Bills Committee for the great interest and trouble they had taken in connection with this Bill. Every member

of that Committee had done his best to make the Bill a workable measure. He wanted to say one word in reference to the question of "sly borrowing," and the attitude taken by the Minister of Labour. If the honourable gentleman took the same attitude when the Bills of the Colonial Treasurer were going through the House his colleague might look for opposition from that quarter, and not from honourable members opposite.

Mr. EARNSHAW could quite understand the quiet sneer of the Premier with regard to sly borrowing. Dunedin must either strike a rate, which was borrowing directly from the people, or it must get this conversion scheme carried. He might point out that in trying to get the sinking fund for works the City of Dunedin had not for one moment said, in putting forward that scheme, that it was a non-borrowing borough. It simply said it had to choose one of two evils: it must either borrow by way of rate or get this conversion money. But the Government, on the other hand, had led the colony to believe that it was a non-borrowing Government, and notwithstanding it had been borrowing on the sly when it had absorbed the sinking funds.

Mr. WARD said it was very amusing to see the professed virtue of honourable members who were now advocating a measure such as this, and who had opposed the financial proposals of the Government. What did they find? They found the last speaker saying that the Borough of Dunedin had either to strike an extra rate or borrow. Then he went on to say that the only difference between this proposal and that of the Government was that the Government had declared they were a non-borrowing Government. It was almost superfluous for him to reiterate what had been said so often from the Government benches, from the public platform, and in the Press of the colony, and which would be said again and again. The difference between the former borrowing and such borrowing as that which honourable members talked of was that the Government had never gone on the market for a loan; it had never done that since it had been in office.

An Hon. MEMBER.—Never advertised it?

Mr. WARD said they had never gone on the market for a loan. What was the position? They found one of the most enlightened constituencies in the colony—a city which possessed many of the keenest, smartest, and cleverest business-men in the colony—namely, the City of Dunedin—giving expression to a desire to convert their loans; and they found honourable members from Dunedin in that House, because the scheme was required in their own place, ready to draw a distinction between what they were doing and that which the colony had done. He desired to point out to the House that it was a great compliment to the Government that the constituency of Dunedin had so soon followed the example of the Government for the purpose of relieving local finance in the same way as that in which the Government attempted to relieve the finances of the colony;

and he thought it would be much more to the credit of his honourable friend opposite if he were to admit his mistake, which had been sheeted home to him in his own constituency, which had come to the House asking for relief by a system of conversion on the lines which the colony had taken. Then, the honourable member for Auckland City (Mr. Crowther) told the House that the Auckland Harbour Board, of which he was a member, attempted to do that, and the honourable member went on to say that they did not succeed, and he thought that the Dunedin Corporation might not succeed. What did it amount to? For the purpose of obtaining immediate relief by a reduction of the interest they were paying for their loans, these people were prepared to add a sum to the principal which posterity would have to provide for; but, in the meantime, for years to come, a great relief would be given to the people. In his opinion the Dunedin people had acted very wisely in endeavouring to convert their loans, and thus relieve their financial obligations.

An Hon. MEMBER.—There are a great many wise people of that kind in New Zealand.

Mr. WARD said it was a good financial proceeding for the City of Dunedin to adopt. It was a great relief to the burdens they were bearing, and it was commendable. He only hoped that they would be as successful in converting their local loans as the Government had been in converting the colonial loans.

Mr. BELL.—It is to be hoped more so.

Mr. WARD said if they were anything like so successful they would do very well indeed, because the relief which had been obtained by the colony had been very great indeed. If they took the whole of the conversions, these had been an immense relief to the taxpayers of the colony, and it was a defensible and a justifiable proceeding. It was against common-sense to suppose that a local body, or the Government, were on the one hand going to continue to set up sinking funds, while upon the other hand the alternative was to go upon the market to borrow. The thing was senseless. If they were going to obtain money to carry on public works, or local bodies' works, what was the use of putting aside a large sum to provide sinking funds while they were adding to the burden in that way? The only thing to be regretted in this matter was the fact that the honourable member for Dunedin City had not in the past examined so comprehensively, lucidly, and honestly the proposals of the Government, which were made for the purpose of relieving the taxpayers of the colony. They found the honourable member coming to the House and saying that it was a good thing to relieve one large section of the taxpayers by means of loan-conversion, and yet he opposed the conversion of general loans, which was to relieve taxpayers throughout the entire colony. He could only express his surprise at the action of the honourable member, and now ask him to recant, and admit that the Government had acted judiciously, and that it had been a good operation for the colony.

Mr. Ward

Mr. ALLEN said the Bill as it came from the Corporation was exactly on a par with the Government borrowing scheme.

An Hon. MEMBER.—No.

Mr. ALLEN.—Yes; it was. It was a conversion Bill, the object of which was to decrease the interest paid in the first case, but the main object of it—and this was the point of the whole thing—was to set free the sinking funds. That was what the honourable gentleman had been advocating.

Mr. WARD.—The Government sinking funds were not set free.

Mr. ALLEN said they were; but this Bill in its present form was a different thing altogether. The sinking fund in this case would not be put into the hands of the Corporation to squander as they liked. The Local Bills Committee tied it up quite tightly; and he did not think the Dunedin Corporation would like the Bill so well as the original Bill, but honourable members were wiser, perhaps, than some of the Corporation members. The Local Bills Committee, as he had said, had tied the sinking funds up. In the first place, the bank overdraft would be reduced, and they could not increase it again. In the second place, it differed from the Government conversions in this respect: The Local Bills Committee had come to the belief that a sinking fund was a good thing, and they provided for the establishment of a sinking fund for the new loan; while the honourable gentleman said it was not part of his policy to establish a sinking fund. In this Bill, as he had said, they established a sinking fund. The Corporation was setting up a sinking fund which, in the course of time, would pay off the whole of this loan.

Mr. WARD.—Knocking it down.

Mr. ALLEN said that was what the Government was doing. He did not believe in the knocking-down process; he believed in the building-up process. They left the knocking-down to his honourable friend. They were setting up a sinking fund for this loan, which, in the course of a certain number of years, would pay the whole loan off. That was sound finance. His honourable friend, in converting loans, left the burden to posterity to pay. When a Government loan became due it would be reconverted, and would be made a bigger loan still. That was the policy which his honourable friend was advocating. The Dunedin Corporation, under this Bill, said they wanted to relieve their annual expenditure by converting their loans, but they agreed to tie up the sinking funds which were set free, and to establish a sinking fund to pay off the debt, which would be paid off in the course of between forty or fifty years.

An Hon. MEMBER.—Five hundred.

Mr. ALLEN said his honourable friend who interjected was at the first meeting of the Committee, but not at the later ones, and he really did not know the Bill. That sinking fund would in the course of thirty years produce over £100,000, and it was quite a different thing from the sort of conversion the Colonial

Treasurer was so fond of. The Bill was not on all-fours with the kind of conversions the Colonial Treasurer advocated. The Minister of Education had stated that he went on the Local Bills Committee with the idea of making the Bill one of sound finance, and he (Mr. Allen) would ask that before some of the conversion operations of the Colonial Treasurer were entered into he would try to make them financially sound also, and protect the sinking funds. The honourable gentleman wished to advocate conversion, and had said that it was a bad thing to convert a loan that would be falling due in the course of three or four years; but he (Mr. Allen) understood that it was sound policy to convert a loan falling due in a few years, and not one due, say, forty years hence. He understood you could not convert a loan with any financial success which was due a long way ahead, when those who held the loan could be sure of their interest at the existing rate for many years. It was only loans due within a few years that you could convert with any success at all, for in this case the holders of the loan had only a few years at high interest-rates. The honourable gentleman also said it was bad policy of the Dunedin Corporation to convert a loan due in 1898; but, if that was bad policy, what could be said of some of the present Government's conversions? He thought that sort of policy would not commend itself to those who had any experience in financial dealings.

Mr. SEDDON said that in mentioning the question of loan-conversion as affecting the Borough of Dunedin he did so with a view to calling honourable members' attention to what the House had done. But he had little thought that it was going to raise a general debate on the whole question of loan-conversion. He did not anticipate that in converting a loan they would be told they were borrowing; and he was rather surprised to find that if you took the sinking fund, £60,000, and applied the same to paying off the overdraft, it was borrowing. He was further surprised to be told that striking a rate and collecting it was also borrowing. What was the difference between taking the sinking fund to pay off a bank overdraft and spending the £49,000 on public works? He would like to know where the difference was. Of course it was just the same. He simply wished to say that the House had that evening dealt with over £300,000 in a very few minutes, and it was only right that attention should be called to it, to show that when it came to the point there was a unanimous opinion on the part of members that what the Government had been doing in respect to loan-conversion, and the policy laid down, met with the almost unanimous assent of members of the House.

The House adjourned at twenty minutes past eleven o'clock p.m.

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

Tuesday, 28th August, 1894.

First Readings—Second Reading—Third Reading—
Land for Settlements Bill—Factories Bill.

The Hon. the SPEAKER took the chair at half-past two o'clock.

PRAYERS.

FIRST READINGS.

Animals Protection Bill, Riverton Harbour Board Empowering Bill, Greymouth Harbour Board Empowering Bill, Waimakariri Water-supply Board Loan Bill, Newmarket Hall Bill, Inangahua County Council Empowering Bill, Gisborne Harbour Bill, Kaitangata Relief Fund Transfer Bill, Hamilton Domains Empowering Bill, Borough of Oamaru Leasing Bill, Auckland Harbour Board Empowering Bill, Mount St. John Reserve Bill, Eketahuna Cemetery Reserve Bill, Wellington Reclaimed Land Bill, Dunedin Loan Conversion Bill, Oaths Bill, Shop and Shop-assistants Bill, Shipping and Seamen's Bill.

SECOND READING.

Wellington City Drainage Empowering Bill.

THIRD READING.

Havelock Commonage Bill.

LAND FOR SETTLEMENTS BILL.

The Hon. Mr. MONTGOMERY.—Sir, in moving, *That this Bill be now read the second time*, I will endeavour to point out the clauses which are of the most importance, and which differ from the clauses of the Act of 1892. After that I shall endeavour to give reasons why this Bill should pass. In clause 3, in reference to the composition of the Board, who are to examine and report upon lands in the different districts, there is some difference, in so far as the Registrar of Lands is not included. By this Bill the Board of Land Purchase Commissioners consists of the Surveyor-General, who is to be Chairman of the Board, the Commissioner of Taxes, and the Commissioner of Crown Lands for the district in which the land is to be taken. Under clause 4—

"The Minister may from time to time direct the Board to negotiate with any owner of private lands in any part of the colony for the purchase or exchange of any lands, at such price, or for so much equivalent land, as may be agreed upon between any owner or lessee and the Board, for the purpose—

- "(1.) Of providing land for settlement under the Land Acts; or
- "(2.) For the acquisition of sites for homesteads for neighbouring high-lying pastoral land; or
- "(3.) For acquiring low-lying land necessary for the working of neighbouring high pastoral land; or
- "(4.) For the exchanging high land suitable only for pastoral purposes for low-lying or agricultural land suitable for settlement."

Clauses 5 and 6 go on to say,—

"Upon any recommendation by the Board that any private land should be acquired, owing to its value, character, and suitability for settlement, the Governor, with the advice and consent of the Executive Council, may conclude the purchase or exchange thereof, and may execute all deeds and instruments, and do or perform all things or acts necessary for the completion of any such purchase, exchange, or taking.

"In the event of the Governor in Council deciding to acquire any land which the Board has recommended should be acquired, and of any owner of such land as aforesaid refusing to sell or exchange, or on failure to come to an agreement with such owner in respect of the sale or exchange of any land required for the aforesaid purposes, the Governor may take such land compulsorily, or so much thereof as he shall deem necessary, under 'The Public Works Act, 1882,' the provisions whereof shall apply to such taking as if it were a taking of land for a public work within the meaning of that Act; and the compensation to be paid for such taking shall be assessed in manner provided by that Act."

Now, there is an addition to the clause of the Bill of 1892, which is as follows:—

"Provided, however, that when a notice of intention to take such land is served on any owner or occupier in pursuance of section ten of the said Act, such owner or occupier shall, within forty days after the receipt of such notice, lodge in writing at the office of the Minister of Lands, at Wellington, a statement of the price required by him for such land, in the form or to the effect set forth in the schedule to 'The Public Works Acts Amendment Act, 1889,' and such statement shall be the claim to be considered by the Compensation Court, in case such land is taken under the said Act."

Now, there is a new subclause, which is of supreme importance, but the rest of the Bill is the same as that introduced in 1892. The new subclause is as follows—it is subsection (4) of clause 7:—

"Any owner of an area of land comprised within one continuous area a portion whereof has been taken compulsorily may, within forty days after he has been notified of the compulsory taking of such portion of land, give notice that he is desirous to sell the remainder of his land or estate left to him, and, on such notice being received, the said part so left shall be deemed to have been taken compulsorily, and he shall be allowed full compensation therefor."

In addition to that subclause, subclause (5) goes on to say,—

"Any owner of land taken compulsorily under this Act may, within one month after the gazetting of any Proclamation taking such land, give notice in writing to the Minister that he elects to remain in possession for a period to be named in such notice, not exceeding nine months from such date, and shall thereupon have a

right to occupy such land for the period so stated, subject to the following conditions:—

"(a.) No part of the purchase-money shall be payable until the expiration of the said period:

"(b.) The Minister and any persons authorised by him, either generally or particularly, shall have full and free right of ingress, egress, and regress through, over, and upon any of the lands or premises so taken, for the purposes of survey, road-making, or inspection, in the same manner and to the same extent as if the said lands were Crown lands unoccupied:

"Provided that in the case of land situated within five miles of the City of Auckland, the City of Wellington, the City of Christchurch, and the City of Dunedin the limitation in this section shall be reduced to five hundred acres."

Honourable members will see that is a very important addition to the Act of 1892, because a man having a large property—say, forty or fifty thousand acres—may have built a large house suitable for his family and for working the property properly. He may have built extensive outhouses, and so on. He may have large plantations, so that, if he were left only one thousand acres adjacent to his homestead, his improvements might be far in excess of improvements required for an estate of one thousand acres. I have no doubt honourable members will consider this is only a just and proper alteration. Now as regards providing the necessary funds. Under the Act of 1892 £50,000 was the amount the Colonial Treasurer was authorised to expend for one year for land to be acquired under that Act. Here the amount is raised, under clause 10, to £250,000. It is a very large addition; but there may be large estates to be purchased, and I shall endeavour to show why it is considered £50,000 will be quite inadequate for the purpose. £250,000 has not been considered, either by the Government or by the other branch of the Legislature, to be too much. My own impression is that it is not too much. On the contrary, we could do with much more. There is also a clause here providing that the money shall be borrowed at a rate not exceeding 4 per cent. When purchasing an estate, say, of forty thousand acres, some of that land may be found not to be suitable for small settlement, but would be more suitable for small grazing-runs. Therefore the area of the holdings has been increased under this section to 2,000 acres. Then, there is one more clause to which I would call the attention of honourable members—namely, clause 29, the last clause in the Bill. No doubt honourable members will give an opinion upon it. It is, "This Act, if not sooner repealed, shall expire on the thirty-first day of March, in the year one thousand eight hundred and ninety-nine." Of course, when Parliament steps in to interfere with private property, and to take it by compulsion, it is requisite necessity should be shown

Hon. Mr. Montgomery

for that act of the State. The property of an individual should be as much under the protection of the State as the life of an individual, and nothing short of necessity should induce this Legislature to sanction any inroad upon any man's private property. Now, I have to show, as far as lies in my power, that necessity exists, or I would not ask the Council to read this Bill a second time. I would call the attention of the Council to this fact: that there is scarcely an acre of land fit for occupation in the South Island, or in Hawke's Bay and other districts, that is not in the possession of private persons. Many of the persons who have acquired these properties have been good colonists. They were among the working-bees of the colony, and their properties should be held sacred against anything save necessity. But we cannot shut our eyes to the fact that last year the population of the colony increased by more than twenty thousand. The increase by births over deaths was eleven thousand, and by immigration ten thousand. We cannot shut our eyes to that: and also there are many able and willing men in New Zealand who cannot find profitable employment at the present time, and have not been able to do so for some time past. In the district I formerly represented in another place, and which I know better than any other part of the colony, but which may be called typical of other districts, there are farmers who have brought up families respectably, and who have educated them thoroughly, and they have brought them up on from fifty to two hundred acres of land. Many of these farmers have three or four sons; and how are these sons to get a living? Are their fathers to split up their properties in the same miserable way that has been done in Ireland, and reduce themselves to a state bordering on pauperism; or are we to give these young men who wish to find homes for themselves an opportunity of going on the lands of the colony? In addition to these, there are many farm-labourers who have saved a little money by prudence. They are not men who cry out in the streets, but men who have done work and saved their wages. These men have a natural ambition to have homes for themselves. They have been brought up working on the land, and that is the business they understand best. Then, we have men in the towns. I know of some of them who have two or three sons, for whom there is no possibility of finding profitable employment; and in many cases the sons have come to the North Island and taken up bush-lands, with the desire to make homes for themselves. These are the people who deserve the attention of this Legislature. They are the very strength of the colony. They are industrious and orderly, and they do not wish to seize any man's property, or to level down by taking from those who have worked to give to those who have not. These men want an outlet for their energies; and I ask honourable gentlemen, where is there an outlet except that afforded by this Bill—that of placing them on the land? That would give employment to hundreds of those now unem-

ployed. Now, it has been said repeatedly that there are plenty of people who are willing to sell land at a fair price, and that, therefore, an Act to enable the State to acquire land compulsorily is not required. Is that so? I will state some facts to show that it is not so. By returns laid before Parliament in accordance with the Land for Settlements Act of 1892 it will be seen that the land offered for sale under this Act comprised 102 properties, containing 913,266 acres:—

“Offers recommended: 10 properties; 33,465 acres.

“Offers accepted: 6 properties; 13,713 acres.

“Properties purchased: 5 properties; 9,113 acres.

“Purchase not yet complete; property; 4,600 acres.

“Offers pending: 12 properties; 70,677 acres.

“Offers declined, with reasons: Price too high—21 properties; 160,632 acres. Land unsuitable—52 properties; 620,309 acres. No demand for land in district—2 properties; 306 acres. No definite offer made—2 properties; 5,077 acres. Withdrawn, or fallen through—3 properties; 22,800 acres. Not accepted by vendors—4 properties; 19,752 acres. Total: 84 properties; 828,876 acres.

“Purchased: 5 properties; 9,113 acres. Offered for selection and taken up: 78 properties; 6,713 acres. Area remaining, 2,400 acres.

“Land offered for selection and taken up: 78 sections; 6,713 acres. 28 resident settlers; 50 non-resident settlers: total, 78. Value of improvements, £1,232.”

Now, Sir, I should like to call the attention of honourable gentlemen to this:—

“SUMMARY, showing certain Lands offered in the Provincial Districts, the Price asked, and Tax-value.

Provincial District.	Area.	Price asked.	Tax-value.	Difference in Excess.
	Acres.	£	£	£
Auckland ...	43,772	120,635	46,765	73,870
Hawke's Bay	20,910	125,457	104,545	20,912
Wellington	1,270	3,500	2,007	1,493
Marlborough	13,008	50,125	41,245	8,880
Canterbury	45,392	104,494	76,297	28,197
Otago ...	2,237	47,940	30,869	17,071
Southland ...	34,000	75,000	56,076	18,924
Totals ...	180,587	627,151	357,894	169,257

Now, Sir, could the Land Board, could the Minister of Lands, could the Government have sanctioned the purchase of these properties? It has been evident that men who hold large properties have been expecting that times would improve, and that there would be a “boom”; and that they would not part with land for anything like the price the Government could afford to pay. I ask honourable members to bear in mind that if the Government cannot get the properties at a reasonable rate they cannot put men upon the land with

any certainty of their making a livelihood and paying rent. Therefore the Government could not acquire properties even to the amount authorised—namely, to £50,000. Well, Sir, I have pointed out that that Act was inoperative; and, when the Legislature is asked for £250,000, it is very evident that we require something more than the Act that has been in force, and which has been inoperative even to the extent of the small amount that has been voted. I know it has been said that there is not much demand for land. Now, we have had, since the meeting of this Chamber last year, an experiment—we have tried a matter which was at first considered only an experiment. We have had the Cheviot Estate. It was bought for £260,000, and improvements have been put upon it to the extent of £22,250. We had, in answer to the Hon. Mr. Stevens, a return read by my honourable friend the Colonial Secretary, which is fresh in the minds of honourable members. It was a statement showing the number of people put upon the Cheviot since it was acquired by the Government, and the number of people that were on it before it was so acquired; and the difference between the two will represent very well what the difference would be if the Government acquired two or three other large estates, and put upon them an industrious population. We can borrow money at $3\frac{1}{2}$ per cent., and we can lend the money to the farmers at—or, rather, we can get from them as rent—5 per cent. No private individual can afford to do that; but the State can do it, and it can therefore put the farmers in a position to make an honest livelihood upon land that will be to all intents and purposes their own, and upon which their families can be brought up. I say the Cheviot is, to some extent, typical of what would take place if this Bill to which we ask the concurrence of this Legislature is passed. I will read from the Budget a departmental statement—vouched for, of course, by the Minister of Lands and the Colonial Treasurer—in reference to this acquisition:—

"The total area purchased is 84,755 acres, and, with two reserves containing 600 acres of Crown lands, and 120 purchased on the boundary, makes a total of 85,475 acres, which is disposed of as follows:—

"73,159 acres leased in perpetuity, and for twenty-one-year terms.
6,498 acres sold for cash.
1,032 acres reserves, &c., not yet leased.
2,066 acres unsold land.
2,720 acres roads, railway-line, &c.

85,475

"Financially, the position is as follows:—

	£
"Original cost of the estate..	260,220
Works and improvements..	22,250
	<hr/> 282,470
Deduct cash receipts ..	35,921
	<hr/> £246,549

Hon. Mr. Montgomery

"As the land leased is bringing in a rental of £13,399, it follows that we are receiving over 5 per cent. on the £246,549, and still have to the good some reserves and township sites not yet disposed of."

This was considered an experiment last year, and at that time there were very melancholy forebodings on the part of members of this Council that the experiment would not be a success. Those who were unfavourable to it gave utterance to these melancholy forebodings; but I would ask if they came to pass. It must be a great satisfaction to them that matters have turned out so much better than they anticipated. That is the result of this purchase, and I ask honourable members to bear it in mind when considering this Bill, and not to have any doubts or fears that the acquisition of land for settlement will be rashly entered into, or rash expenditure incurred, or that it will cause additional taxation on the people of the colony. The amount required under this Land for Settlements Bill is £250,000 per annum, and the duration is five years. Honourable members will no doubt have their opinions on that point. There is one estate not very many miles from the city where I come from that would be admirably adapted for settlement, but it would cost to acquire it probably more money than this £250,000. The Bill now before us gives the power to purchase a large property; and, as in the Act of 1892, if the amount that is contracted for in one year exceeds £250,000, or, rather, if the amount contracted for does not require the whole £250,000, it is provided that the balance shall be carried over to the following year, so that in the next year we shall have available, say, £300,000, instead of £250,000. As for the duration of five years, many people may think that a couple of years would be long enough; but, Sir, it is provided that every year the Minister of Lands shall have to bring up a statement or account of the number of acres taken, how much they cost, the sections into which the estates are divided, the number of settlers placed upon them, and the rent at which the sections are leased. All these particulars will have to be laid before Parliament every year. If the Ministry of the day are reckless or wild in their purchases they will be responsible, and the Parliament can repeal the Act and say that it shall not proceed any further, or that it shall only proceed to such a time as may be agreed upon. I hope, therefore, that honourable members will agree to the five years' limit. The Bill does not bind the Minister of Lands to purchase two hundred and fifty thousand pounds' worth of land, but it provides that he shall only buy up to that amount in one year if there be no surplus unspent from the previous year. We have now springing up a new industry in the colony—the great dairying industry. The sheep-farmers have done great things for the colony in the matter of the export of wool and frozen mutton. It is that which has enabled this colony to pay its way, because it is the difference between the imports and

exports that enables us to do so. This new industry of successful dairy-farming has been rendered possible by machinery. Where farmers had very low prices for grain, there was no chance of making a living by grain-growing; but they have now a good opportunity, with absolute security of making a certain living by dairying. When a man owns ten, fifteen, or twenty milch-cows, or more, his position is assured. A man with twenty cows is absolutely an independent man, if he has got his land at a reasonable rent: and perhaps it is not too much to say that not only should we look forward to employing people now, but we should look to a large increase of our population through the settlement of people on the land—through the settlement of an industrious, frugal, and persevering people on the land of this colony. Numbers of people will go on the land, take to themselves wives, and raise families of children around them; and I say these men will be the truest safeguard for law and order that we can have in this country, for they will not congregate, as some men do at present in some places in masses of two and three hundred, and use language equivalent to 'Down with the rich, and give us equality!' I venture to think that the surest guarantee that the large proprietors can have that law and order will be maintained and the rights of property respected, will be the settlement of an industrious and thriving population upon the lands of the colony in small and moderate-sized farms, in the men being given an opportunity of feeling that this land is their own, that this country is their own, and that they have a safe and secure home for themselves and their families. I ask honourable gentlemen to read the Bill a second time; and I thank the Council for the patient way in which it has listened to me.

The Hon. Dr. POLLEN.—Sir, this Bill has been heralded throughout the colony with so much braying of trumpets and beating of drums, and with so many threats of submergence addressed to this Council, that I expected to find it a much more objectionable one than it really is. I think that it represents a very earnest, and a very honest, and a very loyal desire on the part of the Minister of Lands and his colleagues to promote settlement in this colony. It is, apparently, tempered, or stimulated, by an unreasoning hatred against a certain class of men in this colony who have been officially described as "social pests," but to whose presence in this colony—to whose energy, capital, and labour—its prosperity is in so many respects mainly due, and that New Zealand is able to take the place it does to-day amongst the most flourishing and important—in regard to its extent and population—among the dependencies of the British Crown. Sir, one would have thought the settlement of the land was a new discovery, and that it was reserved for the present Government to make that discovery, and to get a patent for carrying it out. It is within my own personal knowledge that settlement upon the land of the population of the country has been the aim

and end of every Governor, and of every Government, in this colony since its foundation. Governor Hobson did what he could with his somewhat imperfect means in that direction. Governor Shortland followed his lead. Governor Fitzroy struck out a new if mistaken path for himself: he was moved, as I know, by a very sincere and loyal desire to do good. It was the avowed aim and end of the policy of Governor Grey to create a landed aristocracy upon the English model: proof and testimony of that policy is to be found in his Land Regulations of 1853, to which anybody who chooses may refer for information upon the point. It is an historical fact, which everybody knows, that the settlement of this colony did not at first depend upon Government at all. It was mainly due to the enterprise, to the co-operation, of the early settlers. In fact, it is not by any means a new discovery, as we are taught to believe. Nelson, Taranaki, Otago, Wellington, Canterbury—all these were born of private enterprise, and very often suffered from the opposition, instead of being assisted with the help, of the Government of the colony. I myself had something to do in a very small way with the establishment of special settlements in this colony, and my experience in the matter is that the success of this kind of settlement is exactly in inverse proportion to Government interference with their management and to Government expenditure upon their maintenance. Not more than thirty years ago I was associated as coadjutor with a former Superintendent of the Auckland Province, the late John Williamson—and no man in New Zealand was ever moved by a more sincere desire to serve his fellow-citizens and to promote the interests of the colony than he was—in the foundation of special settlements in the North of Auckland by what was known as the forty-acre system. We were lucky enough to place successfully some five or six thousand people upon the land in the North of Auckland. The Government had no money, nor anything but land to give them, and there was no expenditure in consequence for their assistance. Whatever was done was done by the self-reliance of the settlers themselves, and the success was altogether highly satisfactory. Subsequently, as Commissioner for settling the confiscated lands, I had something to do with military settlement in the Waikato and other places. There was a very large expenditure of Government money for this settlement, and the result, I grieve to say, was a very unfortunate failure altogether. The military settlers did not take root there, and, although the settlement in these days in the Waikato and Tauranga has somewhat revived, it is mainly due to the fact that the Government left them alone. The new-comers have succeeded, where the original ones, who were unfitted for the work of settlement, failed. When I hear every day complaints that the people cannot obtain land—when I hear assertions widespread of land-hunger unsatisfied, I ask myself, where are the people? I look at the newspapers published everywhere in

the colony, and I see them overflowing, their columns crammed, with advertisements of land for sale and for occupation, but which cannot find purchasers on any terms at all. These lands are offered on terms very much less than the cost to the present proprietors, and they yet remain unoccupied. I look at the census of the colony, and at the admirable statistics furnished to us constantly by the Registrar-General, and I find every section of the community in its place and doing its appointed work, not excepting even the unemployed. Then, one of the objects of this new legislation is to induce settlement by the unemployed. I am afraid this is not a very hopeful work to undertake. It seems that a certain nomadic tendency has been impressed upon the human race by the great Creator for His own wise purposes, and no human laws can arrest this nomadic tendency. Everywhere, it appears to me, the unemployed form the fringe of this great nomadic contingent, and you must accept the situation and make the best of it. You spread your nets in vain in view of these wild birds; and the cages you make for them, even though gilded as the Cheviot cage has been gilded at this moment, will hold them just as long as there is corn in the trough and water in the bottles, and no longer. Coolgardie, with "four pounds a week and water," will be found to be a stronger temptation for these birds than anything you can offer them. Your cages will not hold them under these circumstances. There is, as we see, an "exodus" already, not of a very alarming character; but it will be as unreasonable to put down this exodus as the fault of the present Government as it was to accuse the tail-end of the Continuous Ministry of that which took place in the colony four years ago. It is the natural solution of these difficulties, and would be effective now, as it has been often before, if the Government would only consent to leave it alone. Sir, I was not in my place in the Council last year when this Bill was disposed of by the Council; but I cordially approve of the action that the Council took on that occasion, as it had the advantage of giving the country more time for the consideration of this question. And this, Sir, has had the further advantage of having produced a very great improvement in the character of the measure now presented to us, as contrasted with the character of the measure presented to us last session. It has been also submitted to the people at the hustings, and, although they have generally affirmed the principle that where land is required for settlement it may very properly be taken, they did not approve, and I am quite sure would not approve, if the question of borrowing had been distinctly presented to them, of any accumulation of encumbrances on the taxpayers of this colony by the addition of a debt of a million and a quarter of money for this particular purpose. That, I am quite sure, would not have met with approval or applause upon any platform of this colony at the late general election. It is true, if I am right in my view of the demand for land

Hon. Dr. Pollen

in this colony, that Ministers, in their efforts to settle the land, will be met by the fact that there are not people of the right stamp to settle on the land and to bestow their favours upon; and the fears are groundless which have been expressed that the Government, having authority to deal with so large a sum of money, would necessarily, in a reckless manner, incur the whole of the expenditure for this purpose in one year. I do not believe that any Government would be guilty of such wickedness, and we have no right to attribute by anticipation to the present Government a crime so serious as that. I think, Sir, that within a very short time, when one or more of these experiments have been tried, it will be found that the right people to settle on the land in that way are not in the colony, and that if the settlements are to succeed at all you must go outside the colony for special settlers, and import settlers tied together by some common sentiment or mutual obligation; instead of collecting them fortuitously from two or three or from the four quarters of the globe, putting them all down on the land together, and telling them to increase and multiply, and replenish the earth. Men do not learn farming, and do not learn to work, by intuition; and it will be found, I think, before very long, without any intervention, without any suggestion from the Tories, that the settlers on the Cheviot itself will begin to complain of the position in which they find themselves, and will realise their actual inability to discharge the obligations which they have very foolishly and unwisely undertaken. That Cheviot Estate was producing for this colony an export of something over £25,000 every year. Now, I venture to say that within the lifetime of this generation twenty-five thousand pounds' worth of surplus produce will not be drawn from that estate by the 171 persons the Government has been successful in inducing to settle on that land. For the success of this patent machinery for forcing settlement and putting men on the land who do not feel at home there, and who know nothing about it, we want, if failure is not to result, great energy, we want men with money, and we want skilled labour, which we have not. I have no intention of opposing this measure. It would be, I think, useless on my part to offer opposition to it, even if I were inclined to do so. As I have said, it is a very laudable thing to make settlers, but I do not think this is the right way to do it. If I am mistaken, and the experiment turns out more fortunately than I expect it to be, no one will rejoice more than myself, or will be more prepared to give all the credit that is due where it may properly be given. I rose not to oppose the second reading of the Bill, but mainly to say that I entirely concur—not having been here last year—and take my full share of the responsibility which the Council incurred for doing what was meet on that occasion.

The Hon. Mr. OLIVER.—We have again presented to us a proposal for the forcible breaking of contracts, and this proposal comes to us, it is said, with the recommendation of

the people. Well, Sir, no doubt the Ministry, who proposed a different measure to us last year, have come back with the seal of the people's approval of their policy generally; but it does not appear to me, as an observer of what took place at the general election, that the sanction of the people can be especially claimed for this measure, for the issues placed before the people were not clear issues. There was a general policy, containing many proposals; and there were side-issues—

The Hon. Sir G. S. WHITMORE. — The drink question.

The Hon. Mr. OLIVER. — which prevented the possibility of a clear verdict being obtained from the people. One of the most important of these side-issues was, as my honourable friend has just suggested, the drink question, or prohibition. And another side-issue which played a very important part was education—denominational education. These two prevent the claim from being truly made that this measure for the forcible breaking of contracts—for that is what I call it—has had the approval of the people. Sir, that being the case, it becomes the duty of the Council to closely examine this proposal; and it appears to me that the course which the Council took last year is justified by this: that the Bill which is now presented to us is not the same as that of last year, but is confessedly a much better Bill. That is a justification for the course which the Council took on that occasion. I do not rise for the purpose of proposing an amendment. I think it probable that the Council will accept in some form the measure which is before it. But it does appear to me that, when such a principle as the breaking of contracts—the breaking-up of the foundations on which our society exists—is proposed to us, it will be becoming on our part to very strictly examine it, and, if possible, lessen the danger that may be apprehended from the passing of such a measure. It is claimed—not in the speech to which we listened by the proposer of the second reading, for he did not enter very largely into the question—but in the country and in another place it has been argued, that every civilised nation has availed itself of compulsory powers of taking land. Well, Sir, that is true to a very limited extent. For purposes of national preservation, for purposes of building fortifications on which, possibly, the very existence of a nation may depend, the Governments of all civilised countries have been in the habit of taking the necessary land on giving ample compensation. And the Legislature of the Mother-country has for years past been in the habit of granting powers for the compulsory taking of land for railways. But, Sir, the areas so taken are very small—they are so small as not to be material; and in every case every inch of land it was proposed to take has been scheduled and described with the utmost minuteness, and is legislated for specially. In no single case has the right been given to a railway company to take land except within the limits of the deviation on the plans of the railway which are placed before

the House, and which are examined in every case most minutely by a committee of experts, aided by skilled evidence. Another instance of the use of this power has been mentioned—that is, the passing in the last few years in the Mother-country of Bills giving powers to local bodies to take land compulsorily for the purpose of cutting the land up into allotments. But there, too, the operation of this compulsory principle is guarded most carefully. In the first place, the locality itself, the local body, the local Government, the ratepayers of the district in which it is proposed to take the land, have to assume the entire responsibility for the success or failure of the experiment. It is the ratepayers, and the ratepayers alone, who can take the land by their properly-elected representatives, and on the shoulders of the ratepayers will fall the expense of any failure that may attend the experiment. And when land is cut up into allotments for the necessary use of labourers, the size of these allotments is limited generally to a quarter of an acre or half an acre, and I think the maximum area permitted under the Allotments Act is one acre. In the Bill which succeeded it—the Small Holdings Bill—there, too, there was a strict limitation of the area into which the land compulsorily taken could be cut up and sold. I think it was five acres: I am not sure whether it was four or five acres, but it did not exceed five acres. Now, Sir, under this proposal which is before us no man's land can be considered safe. It is a reversal of the whole scheme on which civilised countries have grown up. If we take a survey of the world, and ascertain the difference which exists between a progressive and forward and civilised country, and a backward and barbarous one, it will be found that at the root of the difference lies the security of life and property. The secure and guaranteed possession of property is at the root of advancement and civilisation. Sir, it fills one with astonishment to observe the light-hearted way in which a fundamental law of that kind is here sought to be interfered with. One is lost in astonishment. It seems to me that the interference proposed is no less destructive than would be a sudden increase of liability to earthquakes. All our ideas of what is stable and lasting are overturned, and there is a feeling of insecurity and general dismay. Well, Sir, in the world of social law will this interference act; and no man, however humble, however modest his possessions may be, can, if this principle is lightly introduced, feel that he is secure in those possessions, and that henceforth he can regard them as his own. The contracts for land which have been made have been made in every case in this colony with the Government. It is the Government that has been the seller. Now, we have a proposal that one of the parties shall have the power of forcibly breaking the contract—of subverting every principle for which Governments exist, for government exists for the very purpose of securing the full execution of contracts entered into. If we lessen this feeling of security, let it not

be imagined that it is one class only that will suffer. That is not so, every class must inevitably suffer, and, as usually happens when foolish legislation has been obtained, the working-classes will be those who will suffer most. Already, Sir, we see the results produced by proposals of this kind. Property has fallen in value; every one has a feeling of insecurity; a heavy pall seems to rest on the colony, and it cannot emerge from the depression from which it has been suffering for years, simply because no one feels secure. There is no member of the Council who has not heard of persons who have quite recently abandoned their intention of improving their properties, of building houses, and generally of making large expenditure, because they are afraid to do so, and because they feel that their entire property will be under a perpetual threat. Sir, we have heard something from the Hon. Mr. Montgomery of the "proved need" for this. He only claims that this principle is admissible in the face of the proved existence of necessity. I would submit that it would pay this community better to incur a very large liability to loss in the purchase from voluntary sellers of land on which to settle a large population than to introduce such a principle as this. We have heard of some of the results of the purchase of the Cheviot Estate. That estate was not purchased primarily for settlement. It was purchased for quite another purpose. It was purchased for the protection of the taxation and revenue of the country. But it is claimed that, whereas last year the settlement of the Cheviot Estate could only be regarded as an experiment, this year we must regard it, in the face of the statistics to which we have listened, as a proved success.

The Hon. Mr. MONTGOMERY.—I said some people considered it an experiment.

The Hon. Mr. OLIVER.—Everybody considers it to be an experiment. There is no man in the country who does not consider that the Cheviot is still in the experimental stage. There is no use saying what it may be this year or next year. We cannot regard it as anything more than an experiment for some years to come. I will tell the honourable gentleman why. We frequently hear of occupation by a class called "croppers"—men who seek temporary occupation in order to take one crop or two crops out of the land, and are willing to give high rentals for this temporary occupation. In my part of the country it is not an uncommon thing to find people undertaking the occupation of land in that way; and it may be predicted, I think, with some confidence that the men who have got on the Cheviot, or who have leased other lands which are among the experimental purchases of the Government, may some fine day be found wanting. They will probably have extracted all they can profitably take out of the soil in the way of crops. They may have taken one, two, or three crops, and it may pay them to take these crops, because the rent which they are to pay is extremely light—only 5 per cent.—and they can easily make a profit if they are

Hon. Mr. Oliver

fortunate in the season, and then, Sir, they will seek fresh woods and pastures new. And what will be the condition of lands so abandoned by these people? The last condition of the land will be far worse than the first. The improvements will probably consist merely of fencing, for which each occupier is only responsible for half the cost, his neighbour paying the other half. The croppers to whom I allude do not live in luxury on the land. They put up a sod hut with a galvanised-iron roof, and give shelter to their horses by means of a galvanised-iron shed: their improvements are then complete. For a few pounds they can get all the accommodation they want, and when their crop is saved there is no great sacrifice in leaving behind them what improvements they have made. I believe if there is need of land to settle people on who possess the knowledge and capital to make it pay, that it would be far better for the colony to face the loss of a pound or two per acre in the difference between the buying and the selling price, rather than introduce a principle so destructive as that contained in the Bill before us. Then, as to the area of land that may be held in large districts, what man can feel secure in the possession of even the thousand acres which is the maximum permitted for a holding of first-class land? We have seen that in another place quite lately, apparently just on the spur of the moment, and almost without debate, this thousand acres in the case of land within five miles of the four principal cities of New Zealand was reduced from a thousand to five hundred acres—half of the specified area swept away at one careless blow. Who can feel secure that the five hundred acres will not be the maximum applied to the country generally next year? and who can feel secure that even five hundred acres will be maintained, and that it will not fall to one hundred and fifty, or one hundred, or even fifty acres? No one can visit the Old Country without being struck with admiration at the result of long ages of persevering industry and tasteful expenditure in making improvements upon the land there. We have a country which is worthy of being treated in the same manner, and which would respond to such treatment not less generously than the Old Country which we have left; but, Sir, with the exception of such improvements as will be suitable to very small properties indeed if we accept this Bill, we must abandon all hope in that direction. We were told the other day, and we had reiterated to us to-day, the statistics of settlement which have been achieved; and it appears that the settlement which we have accomplished has cost, if I rightly make it out, about £1,000 a settler. According to the report of the Lands Department the area voluntarily placed under offer last year was nearly a million acres, while only a certain portion of that area was accepted; and the report of the Surveyor-General seems to point to this: that if the law were slightly relaxed very much greater use could have been made of these lands. In fact, the large area which was voluntarily offered to the Govern-

ment is an encouragement not to spoliation, but to patience, and to the endeavour to so alter the law that the Minister may be able to avail himself of a larger proportion of the areas which have been offered. Now, very much importance was attached by my honourable friend Mr. Montgomery to the difference which was found to exist between the prices wanted for this land which was offered and the land-tax valuation. I do not think that too much ought to be made of that. Everybody knows that when any one of us is called upon to make a return on which taxation will be placed he looks at the value of his property from the point of view of as small a capital value as he can honestly make. And he is justified in doing so, because the law itself makes the valuation depend on its selling-price at that time. Now, Sir, during the whole existence of this kind of taxation the selling-price of any land in this colony has been extremely difficult to ascertain. It is recognised that the value of property when valued for taxing purposes is likely to be less rather than more, and I do not think the Assessment Court, when called upon to value any estate that may be compulsorily taken will attach too great importance to the property-tax valuation. I should hope, at any rate, they would not, because, if it is rigidly adjudged that the property-tax valuation shall be the value for sale, a very great amount of injustice will be done. There is another reason why we might have gone on patiently and without compulsory powers, and that is the existence of the Assets Company—a company with which we have all recently made some sort of acquaintance. It is understood that the Assets Company of the Bank of New Zealand is the possessor of very large areas of land, which it is extremely desirous of selling. Now, in addition to the fact which my honourable friend Dr. Pollen has mentioned, that the newspapers are full of advertisements offering lands for sale at prices less than they have cost the owners, there is the Assets Company, from which the Government, I am sure, could help themselves very liberally, and probably at not excessive prices. But great stress is laid on the fact that a fairer method of ascertaining the proper compensation to be paid is contained in this Bill than was formerly proposed: and certainly that must be confessed to be true. But the unfairness of compulsorily taking consists in this: that the time selected for making a compulsory purchase may be such a one as will not permit of a fair value being obtained by the present proprietor. If the proprietors are not forced to sell, they do not choose a time of great depression to find a purchaser. Under this Bill the purchaser can choose his own time, and can come in and seize a man by the throat, and say, "I do not care whether these are times of depression or of elation. I am going to get your land." The proprietor is thus placed at a considerable disadvantage. So it appears to me that that argument scarcely serves to recommend this method. Then, there is the question whether

we have so many landless men amongst us who are fitted by experience and knowledge of farming to settle on our lands. For my own part, I very much question it. There is no evidence furnished by the Minister who proposed the second reading of the Bill to that effect. The instances mentioned by him do not seem very conclusive. He said he knew in his own neighbourhood families who had been brought up well and educated well, and who were prepared to take their part in life. Their fathers occupied, he said, from fifty to two hundred acres. At the same time he told us—I do not know with what exactitude—that the limit of area into which these first-class lands compulsorily taken were to be cut up and sold was six hundred acres. It does not appear to me, if this is so—

The Hon. Mr. MONTGOMERY.—That is the extreme.

The Hon. Mr. OLIVER.—My argument is this: that, if families in the honourable gentleman's immediate neighbourhood have been well brought up on from fifty to two hundred acres, that affords no justification to the Government for taking by force any one's land for the purpose of helping unknown people to six hundred acres. As I have said, I am not going to move any hostile motion, but I think it is our bounden duty to thoroughly examine this Bill, because, even although the sanction of the people can be properly claimed for it, the people after all can only broadly and generally state their wishes, and then it would remain for an Assembly of this kind to put the measure into form, and to exercise all the experience, all the prudence and wisdom in its power, so that the people may not be injured by a want of performance of duty on our part. It seems to me that the important parts of the Bill which we might try to modify are, possibly, the composition of the Board, which decides what lands are to be taken, and which has to make inquiry to ascertain the real necessities in any specified district for the application of this drastic measure; and I think we might very well consider the question of the maximum area into which the land so obtained should be cut up and sold. If we have to accept so dangerous a principle, we should endeavour to lessen, if we can, its dangers by limiting the application. If this is proposed as a remedy for the "unemployed" difficulty, then it appears to me that the area which my honourable friend mentioned as sufficient upon which to bring up respectably a family is sufficient, and might be adopted by us. Then, there is the question of who shall pay the cost of ascertaining the value. That does not appear to be clearly defined in "The Public Works Act, 1882." It seems to me too bad to call upon a man suddenly to give up his land, and then throw the responsibility and expense on him of bringing evidence of its value before the Assessment Court; because, if for national purposes a man's land is to be interfered with in this way, the cost of proving the amount of compensation to which he is entitled should fall on the country. I do not

intend to detain the Council any longer. I suppose that, in some form or another, this Bill will pass, and I hope that in passing it we shall do all that may in us lie to make it as innocuous as possible.

The Hon. Sir G. S. WHITMORE.—Sir, I said when this Bill was before us last year that I approved of it, because I thought it was a very practical measure. But to authorise the Minister to employ only the sum of £50,000 to buy out that noxious animal the “social pest” appeared to me to be ludicrous, and it looked to me as if the desire was not so much to get rid of this constructed criminal as to keep him there, and well to the fore, and flog him perpetually on all occasions, in season and out of season, with the whip of scorpions. The Hon. Mr. Oliver just now said that the owner of these lands had entered into a fair contract, and, if the Government did not perform its part of the contract, who was to protect him? I am sorry to say I have seen a good deal in the last few years of the protection of the individual in regard to his contract. I agree that the Bill before us now is a great deal better than the Bill of last year. Firstly, the amount of money available is made larger—five times as large—and, for my part, I think it might have been made much larger still, or practically unlimited, so that we might be able to eliminate from our society altogether this pest, which at this moment seems to be kept for no other purpose in the colony than to undergo abuse. They are the people whose enterprise and courage made this colony—who have been the cause of making happy homes for numbers of people. They have enabled numbers of people to rear families on one hundred or two hundred acres, and have enabled the children to be educated. We have now made them criminals of the worst description, and nothing we can say is too bad for them. But I say that there are scarcely any of these landholders who would not be glad to get the opportunity of shaking the dust of the colony off their feet. That is exactly the feeling, I know, of a great number of these people, and I believe the same would apply to the great companies. If there is real necessity, why not borrow enough money to buy out all these big companies? There is surely enough land in the hands of the Levels Company, the Edendale Company, or the Assets Company. If there is this earth-hunger, why not get rid of these absentees in the first place? I saw by the Order Paper that there is a proposal to take certain kinds of land first. Well, I think the first limitation should be to take the lands of the absentees and of the large companies. There is no necessity to come down on the resident settler who has done so much for New Zealand—in fact, who has made it—simply for the sake of providing land for those who had not the courage or intellect to come out here when the first settlers did. I think it is the fault of the Bill that there are no limitations as to value. Last year I and others objected to forcing a man to live on a little part of his land, which he did not want to live upon. If he was to be

removed at all, he should be removed by the purchase of all of his land. That has been put in the Bill now, and I think it is a distinct improvement. There was also another matter brought up on that occasion, and that was the breach of contract with the settlers of Nelson and Marlborough. It was thought that their contracts should not be broken. I see it is now proposed to give them compensation. I think the Hon. Mr. Oliver said it was unfair that a Ministry should hug to itself the credit of having driven a hard bargain with the early settlers, and that in consequence of the pressure of the wool-market, or the grain-market, or whatever it might be, he should be forced to have his land valued at a time when land is not of very great value: because, after all, a man allows his land to be valued on the basis of what it brings in. I think, at all events, it ought to be laid down in this Bill that 10 per cent. should be added to the tax-value of the land before it is purchased by the Government. We ought to fix a minimum which should be the tax-value of the land with 10 per cent. added. I should support that. The honourable gentleman who introduced the Bill said one or two things which struck me very forcibly. Among other things, he spoke about the country settler who brought up so many lusty sons, and he said those sons would have to go to the North Island—as if he were speaking of the North Pole. We are in the colony in one part of New Zealand as in another; and what hardship would it be for young men to have to come and settle in this part of the colony? In England or in Ireland they think nothing of going away to settle in Scotland, or India, or other places. They go away, and, as a rule, profit by it. There is no reason why a child when it is able to leave the nest should be enabled to find a property just opposite his father's gate. It appears to me to be perfectly childish that an enterprising man should not show a little of the spirit that brought their fathers out to this then barbarous country. I do not see why we should be expected to commiserate a poor wretch because he has to come and live in the North Island. The same mistake seems to have been fallen into by both my honourable friends Mr. Reynolds and Mr. Montgomery. The whole colony is not Otago or Canterbury, as the case may be. I did think, when we decided to abolish the provinces, we would not have kept up such distinctions. Are these old traditions to be kept still? Is it to be considered a desperate hardship that young men should have to come to the North Island? I think it is a pity that an honourable gentleman who is a Colonial Minister should not be a little more colonial in his ways of thought. Then, the Hon. Dr. Pollen said that to let people alone was a very great deal the best way of securing their prosperity. Now, coming from a province which has been severely let alone—which has had no Government expenditure—I can quite agree with him. Let the honourable gentleman take the trouble to spend a few weeks in Hawke's Bay. He would find that, where the coun-

Hon. Mr. Oliver

try was covered with fern right down to the seashore, simply because they have been left to their own fate the Hawke's Bay settlers have now made that country another Eden. There is no flat country there, with the exception of the valley through which the train runs. Why, the country is now like an emerald, and it has been made so by the persistent enterprise of the settlers who took it up thirty or forty years ago, and who had to pack their posts and rails and carry their produce themselves. And they had to import their timber, as there was no wood there. And now look at it. You would not find such a fine lot of roads in any part of the country, and the fern has gone. With all the advantages of the honourable gentleman's province, which is of a level character, and with the advantages of other parts of the colony on which money has been squandered, they have not such good roads as are to be found in Hawke's Bay. I can speak more especially about one part of the colony where, I think, little short of seven millions of money has been spent. Some years ago I travelled from Patea to New Plymouth. I went along a road made at the honourable gentleman's expense, and my own, and everybody-else's, and every quarter of a mile we came to a district road, and these roads were the only part of the country where the fern was as high as in the country where no roads are made at all. They have the sea-coast road, and the inland road, and a railway—all entirely at the expense of the colony; and the money which has been expended there at that time did not do any good at all. I have it on the evidence of one of the oldest settlers, who told me that the war had ruined Taranaki. I asked him how, and he said, "The war-money that came to us lightly went away from us lightly. When the money was here it ruined the district, by destroying enterprise." However, that is only for the time being, and I think in a very short time it will recover. There is no doubt that to dry-nurse a district is to ruin it, and that is one of the objections I have to this Bill. Why not let people who get land at 5 per cent. make their own roads—at any rate, their preliminary roads—and do a little to make their country, in the same way as the people did who came before them? As I said before, I am sorry the Government have not asked for more money, to enable them to do away with that class of people against whom they are continually talking. I wish also to join with the Hon. Mr. Oliver in saying that we must not mistake the "unemployed" cry. I think, in the records of the Police Court, it will be found that the class of people brought here from Australia and other places are not people who wish to find work, and are not the people who are required by the colony. I heard the police-list read out the other day, and I think there were fifteen hundred Spielers, and a considerable number of burglars, and so on. In connection with that, I should like to say that, seeing so many people of that class are being sent over from the other colonies, we should return the compliment, and pay money to send these

people from here to Coolgardie and other places. Now with regard to what has been said about the Cheviot Estate and its prosperity. I know very well that we cannot judge of the prosperity of a place by the number of applications for sections, especially in places that have not been very much cropped. The prosperity of a place depends upon what the country will produce. The Cheviot Estate used to export three thousand bales of wool a year, and has paid to the colony £3,000 a year in property-tax. Well, I hope it will improve when the new settlers have done some work upon it. We have heard that that property will grow wheat, and so on, but there is a great deal of force in what the Hon. Mr. Oliver says—that sometimes when you take one or two white crops from some land it will tend to exhaust it. If the honourable gentleman has travelled between Strasburg and Paris he would pass through a part of the country where many of the properties, some of them supporting large families, are not larger than an acre or two. Then, if you look at by no means the best county in England—Kent—on your way to London, the first thing that strikes you is the difference between the crops, which by contrast appear magnificent. The late Lord Shaftesbury, who was a well-known philanthropist, on one occasion, when speaking in the House of Lords, said, "I am bound to admit that spade farming is a failure." And we should not throw away our experience of the past. We ought to think a little whether it is possible for families to continue to exist upon very small patches of land. New Zealand is an admirable pastoral country, but it is yet to be proved whether it is a good agricultural one, handicapped as it is by its distance from market. These are things we require to think about. The Bill is one which I feel sure is wanted to allay a feeling of discontent in the country, and I hope the Government will utilise the Bill to get rid of the large properties. If the Government would bring down by Governor's message a proposal to utilise double or treble the amount proposed in the Bill for the purchase of land, I would cheerfully agree to it. It is a fact that you cannot resist public opinion, and you must always make a community of Englishmen rely chiefly on themselves. If they will have their way they are always willing to pay for it. I do not think there is any desire on the part of the people to take away land from anybody except by giving full compensation for it. I am afraid if we do not state a fair minimum there will be a temptation to the Minister to pride himself upon the cheapness with which he can acquire the land.

The Hon. Mr. PHARAZYN.—Sir, the honourable gentleman who moved the second reading of this Bill told us that if the State takes a man's property it only ought to do so under circumstances which necessitate it, and he went on to argue that this necessity had occurred in this colony. Well, I do not think he made out his case in at all a satisfactory manner. I think a good deal of what he said has been very thoroughly answered by my honourable friend Mr. Oliver, so I will not follow the

honourable gentleman in all his arguments, but in discussing this measure I propose to deal with its principle, and the expediency of its application to the existing state of things in this country in relation to the ownership of land, rather than to the machinery provided in this Bill. The first thing that strikes any one on reading this Bill is that it is a dangerous measure, which strikes at the security of property, in a way which I do not think I ever remember to have been done before—certainly not in this country. If there is one thing more than another which history and the experience of mankind teach, it is that security of property is essential to the progress of any community and to civilisation itself. Any attack upon property is not only necessarily followed by very great evil to the person whose property is attacked, but it gives rise to a general feeling of alarm amongst those who have any property of any kind, even though they are not directly attacked. It not only injures the few, but it inflicts still greater evil upon the many. We are so accustomed to the benefits of security that we hardly realise upon what it really rests; and, Sir, the question is so complex, and requires such far-reaching consideration, that I will not venture to describe upon what security rests in my own words, but I will quote from a very high authority—namely, Bentham, in his “Theory of Legislation,” as given by Dumont. In chapter 7—I dare say my honourable friend is conversant with the book—treating on security, he says,—

“We come now to the principal object of law—the care of security. That inestimable good, the distinctive index of civilisation, is entirely the work of law. Without law there is no security, and, consequently, no abundance, and not even a certainty of subsistence; and the only equality which can exist in such a state of things is an equality of misery.”

Then he goes on to say, after referring to the natural desire of people to protect what they possess,—

“Law alone has done that which all the natural sentiments united have not the power to do. Law alone is able to create a fixed and durable possession which merits the name of property. Law alone can accustom men to bow their heads under the yoke of foresight, hard at first to bear, but afterwards light and agreeable. Nothing but law can encourage men to labours superfluous for the present, and which can be enjoyed only in the future. Economy has as many enemies as there are dissipators—men who wish to enjoy without giving themselves the trouble of producing. Labour is too painful for idleness; it is too slow for impatience. Fraud and injustice secretly conspire to appropriate its fruits. Insolence and audacity think to ravish them by open force. Thus security is assailed on every side—ever threatened, never tranquil, it exists in the midst of alarms. The legislator needs a vigilance always sustained, a power always in action, to defend it from this crowd of indefatigable enemies.

“Law does not say to man, ‘Labour and I

will reward you’; but it says, ‘Labour, and I will assure to you the enjoyment of the fruits of your labour—that natural and sufficient recompense which, without me, you cannot preserve; I will insure it by arresting the hand which may seek to ravish it from you.’ If industry creates, it is law which preserves; if in the first moment we owe all to labour, at the second moment, and at every other, we are indebted for everything to law.”

After enlarging upon this principle, he proceeds,—

“The principle of security extends to the maintenance of all these expectations; it requires that events, so far as they depend upon laws, should conform to the expectation which law itself has created.

“Every attack upon this sentiment produces a distinct and special evil, which may be called a *pain of disappointment*.”

Then he continues in a later chapter to give examples of attacks upon security, and he says,—

“Property is nothing but a basis of expectation—the expectation of deriving certain advantages from a thing which we are said to possess in consequence of the relation in which we stand towards it.

“There is no image, no painting, no visible trait, which can express the relation which constitutes property. It is not material; it is metaphysical; it is a mere conception of the mind.

“The idea of property consists in an established expectation—in the persuasion—of being able to draw such or such an advantage from the thing possessed, according to the nature of the case. Now, this expectation, this persuasion, can only be the work of law. I cannot count upon the enjoyment of that which I regard as mine except through the promise of the law, which guarantees it to me. It is law alone which permits me to forget my natural weakness. It is only through the protection of law that I am able to enclose a field, and to give myself to its cultivation, with the sure, though distant, hope of harvest.

“Property and law are born together and die together. Before laws were made there was no property; take away laws and property ceases.

“As regards property, security consists in receiving no check, no shock, no derangement to the expectation, founded on the laws, of enjoying such-and-such a portion of good. The legislator owes the greatest respect to this expectation which he has himself produced. When he does not contradict it he does what is essential to the happiness of society; when he disturbs it he always produces a proportionate sum of evil.”

In chapter xv. of the same book the following occurs:—

“It will be useful to give some examples of what I mean by attacks upon security. It will be a means of putting principles in a clearer light, and of showing that what is unjust in morals cannot be innocent in politics. Nothing

Hon. Mr. Pharazyn

is more common than to authorise under one name what would be odious under another."

The author goes on to give examples of public acts of injustice inflicted upon the Roman people, such as the abolition of debts on the plea of usury, the effect of which was to increase the rate of interest; the demand for a new division of lands, which led to general confiscations. He also cites France in 1782, where taxes were unequally levied:—

"I shall conclude by a general observation of great importance. The more the principle of property is respected the stronger hold it takes on the public mind. Light attacks upon this principle prepare the way for heavier ones. A long time has been necessary to carry property to the point where we now see it in civilised societies; but a fatal experience has shown with what facility it may be shaken, and how easily the savage instinct of plunder gets the better of the laws. Governments and the people are in this respect like tamed lions—let them but taste a drop of blood and their natural ferocity revives."

He then quotes a verse from Lucan, Book iv., beginning—

Si torrida parvus
Venit in ora cruor, rediunt rabiesque furorque;

which he translates,—

If but a little blood
Touch his hot mouth, fury and rage return;
His counsel'd jaws swell with the tasted gore;
He raves, and from his trembling keeper scarce
Restrains his teeth.

Then he goes on to point out the evils that, as we know historically, have arisen from attacks upon the security of property, and the tendency of small attacks to go on until they become larger. Every one is perfectly aware of the importance of this principle, and I think it has been acknowledged even by the honourable gentleman who moved the second reading of this Bill. Now, it is surely a serious thing to interfere with the security of property, and the brief extracts I have read show the result if this is tampered with. Yet this is what the Bill does in the clause relating to compulsory purchase. Any man's property may be taken, and a cruel wrong may be perpetrated upon that man and his family, and widespread alarm produced. It may be said that to argue in this way proves too much, and that if property is to be absolutely secure there ought to be no right on the part of Government or a local body to take land for the purposes of a road or a railway. I say that is modified by the consideration that in certain cases property must be interfered with for the public good, if it is a case of extreme necessity. Dumont goes on to consider this aspect in a chapter on enforced exchanges. Quoting from Montaigne's Essays, he says,—

"Asyages, in Xenophon's Cyropædia, asks Cyrus to give an account of his last lesson. Cyrus answers thus: 'One of the boys in our school who had a coat too small for him gave it to one of his companions a little smaller than himself, and took away his coat, which was too large. The preceptor made me the

judge of this dispute, and I decided that the matter should be left as it was, since both parties seemed to be better accommodated than before. Upon which, the preceptor pointed out to me that I had done wrong, for I had been satisfied with considering the convenience of the thing, whereas I ought first to have looked at the justice of it; and justice never would allow violence to be done to any one's property.'"

That is an old story, which probably is familiar to most members of this Council. He goes on to say,—

"What ought we to think of this decision? At the first view it would appear that a forced exchange is not contrary to security, provided an equal value is given. How can I be said to lose in consequence of a law, if, after it has had its full effect, the amount of my property remains the same as before? If one has gained, and the other has not lost, the operation seems to be a good one. No, it is not. He, whom you suppose to have lost nothing by a forced exchange, in reality has lost, since everything movable or immovable has different values for different persons, according to circumstances, and every one expects to enjoy the favourable circumstances which may augment the value of such or such a part of his property. If the house that Peter occupies would be more valuable to Paul, that is no reason why Paul should be gratified by forcing Peter to yield the house to him for the sum which it is worth to himself. That would be to deprive Peter of the benefit which he has a right to derive from the very circumstance that the house is worth more to Paul.

"And suppose Paul should say that, for the sake of peace, he had offered a price above the ordinary value, and that Peter refuses it out of pure obstinacy, still it might be replied to him, 'This surplus of price which you pretend to have offered is only a supposition of yours.' The opposite supposition is just as probable. For if you had really offered more than the house is worth he would have hastened to seize so favourable a circumstance, which might not occur again, and the bargain would have been soon concluded. If he did not accept your offer it is a proof that you were deceived in your estimate, and that if the house were taken from him on the conditions you propose it would be an injury to his fortune, if not to what he possesses, at least to what he has a right to acquire.

"'No,' Paul will reply; 'he knows that my estimate is higher than anything he can expect in the ordinary course of things; but he also knows my necessity, and he refuses a reasonable offer in hopes to derive an unfair advantage from my situation.'

"I perceive a principle which may serve to settle this difference between Peter and Paul. Things must be distinguished into two classes: those which ordinarily have only their intrinsic value, and those which are susceptible of a value of affection. Houses of the common sort, fields cultivated in the usual way, a crop of hay or corn, and ordinary kinds of manu-

factures seem to belong to the first class. To the second may be referred pleasure-grounds and gardens, libraries, pictures, statues, collections of natural history. A forced exchange of such objects should never be permitted. The value they derive from a sentiment of affection cannot be appreciated. But objects of the first class may be submitted to forced exchanges whenever it is the only means to prevent great losses. I possess a piece of land from which I derive a considerable revenue, but which I can approach only by a road running along the edge of a river. The river overflows and washes away the road. My neighbour obstinately refuses me a passage along a strip of land which is not worth the hundredth part of my field. Ought I to lose my all through the caprice or hostility of an unreasonable neighbour?

"But, to prevent the abuse of a principle so delicate, rigorous rules ought to be laid down. I say, then, that forced exchanges ought to be permitted to prevent a great loss, as in the case of a field rendered inaccessible except by a passage through another.

"By observing all the scruples of the English legislators in this behalf, we may perceive the respect which is paid in that country to the rights of property. If a new road is to be opened, an Act of Parliament must be first obtained. All interested are heard; and the Legislature, not content with assigning an equitable satisfaction to the proprietors, protects houses, gardens, and such other objects as may have a value of affection, by special exceptions in the Act."

That is a reasonable principle, and a principle which has always been acted upon when land has been taken for railways or roads. But that is a totally different thing from allowing land to be taken in the wholesale way proposed under this Act. There is, first of all, this distinction: that a road or railway is really taken for public purposes, and the whole public has a right to use that road or railway; but here we merely take away property from one set of people in order to give it to another set of people. We do not really effect a public object; we merely transfer a certain amount of property from one private person to some other private person. To make this measure just and expedient, a much greater case of necessity must be made out than has been made out by the honourable gentleman. What are the facts as to the ownership of land in New Zealand? There are about one hundred thousand people who are owners of land in this colony, out of a total population of something like seven hundred thousand—that is, one person in seven. In France, where the land is extremely subdivided, it is about one in four, or a little over. I have taken out an abstract of the numbers of persons who own land, outside boroughs, of less than a thousand acres, and they number about thirty-five thousand. These statistics may be found in the Appendix to the Journals for 1892, Volume I., B.—20A, page 4, Table No. 8. About 85,000 outside boroughs own land of a less acreage than 1,000 each; about 1,600 own from 1,000 to 6,000 acres each, of whom 992 hold

from 1,000 to 2,000; about 290 own from 6,000 to 10,000 acres each; 104 own from 20,000 to 100,000 acres each; 4 own from 100,000 to 150,000 acres each; and 6 own 150,000 acres and over. The total number of acres is about 39,000,000, valued at about £60,000,000. We must remember that, so far as the larger owners are concerned, the land is of very much less value than the land belonging to the smaller owners, as a large extent of it is composed of mountainous country. But I think what I have stated proves that land is widely distributed in this colony. I find from the report of the Department of Lands and Surveys of this year that of Crown lands four million acres are fit for settlement. Eleven million acres are held by the Crown. In addition to this, there are about three million acres of Native land. A very large portion of the land held by the Crown is fit for settlement, but there is, as the Hon. Mr. Oliver and other speakers have pointed out, a very large quantity of private land that has been forced on the market, and which is for sale at a very moderate figure. The fact is, what is now demanded in this Bill is not land in general but land in some particular place. Persons seem to think that they have a right to land wherever they happen to be. And what will be the effect of this measure? It will stop settlement in that part of the colony which is now unoccupied. I remember, in the early days, before Hawke's Bay was settled, I was living in the Wairarapa, and I was anxious to push out for myself. I think in the year 1852 I went into Hawke's Bay, and walked over a considerable portion of it, and selected land for myself. Well, I had been brought up "not to covet nor desire other men's goods," so it never occurred to me to try to get some of my neighbours' lands near where I was living—near to my father's. There seems now to be an idea that one should keep within a very reasonable distance of the paternal roof: but in those days we were not afraid to push out into wild country; so myself and others came up from the Wairarapa, and the next year I took up about a thousand ewes, and practically opened up the Hawke's Bay district, and so in the course of time the country was widely settled. If people had been limited to taking small properties close to where they happened to be living at the time, that country would not possibly have been settled for years. If such a measure as this had been in operation in the early days, the whole colony would consist of a few small cockatoo farmers, who would never have had the large amount of property in sheep and cattle which form our principal exports at the present time. Our large exports have been the making of the colony. We have at present over twenty million sheep, and our export of wool is something like four and a half millions sterling. Our frozen mutton amounts to considerably more than a million, and I may say that all our chief exports at the present time are from land held in a way which is now considered to be objectionable. It means something like six millions per annum. There is a great deal

Hon. Mr. Pharazyn

of nonsense uttered in regard to the advantages of close settlement. I am sure that in forcing people to settle closely upon the land, as proposed under this Bill, you are absolutely lessening the possible wealth of the colony—lessening the total produce to be divided amongst the people of the colony. What will be the result? Such a system is a fallacy, and can result in nothing but a miserable system of squalid socialism. People will be reduced to making a bare living, without enterprise or any ambition. They cannot really improve their position, and the returns from the land will be very much less than at present. To put a man in a position where he is just able to keep himself, and cannot add to the wealth of the colony, seems to me to be a very pernicious thing. He will not have any surplus to swell the exports, which are absolutely necessary if only to pay the interest on our public debt. It simply means that the great mass of the people will remain as they were. Whatever credit may be given to the Government and the Legislature for honest intentions,—and a considerable amount of credit ought, no doubt, to be given to them,—yet it seems to me that in all this business there is a very large amount of envy, hatred, and jealousy against those who are better off than their neighbours. It is really founded upon what Bentham calls “the principle of antipathy,” a dislike to large landowners, and envy of persons who are better off, and a general desire to “level down” instead of “levelling up.” I admit that a majority, if it chooses, can always have its own way; but the fact that a majority has the power is no justification for tyrannizing over the minority. Of course, it may be that a good deal of this agitation is due to the fallacies that have been widely spread by Henry George and others as to the unearned increment and nationalisation of the land, and I have no doubt a considerable number of persons are exceedingly anxious to nationalise the land—whatever that may mean—and in some way or another to obtain for the State the control of land, in order to divide it among the people by introducing something in the nature of the single-tax; and I can only say, with other honourable gentlemen, that in my opinion the whole thing is a perfect fallacy. The whole fallacy of the unearned increment has been, I think, fully exposed. When passing through America I stayed some time in New York, and there was a great agitation going on in regard to this question. Father McGlynn, a Catholic priest, and the Anti-Poverty Society, agitated in favour of all the doctrines of Henry George, and their arguments were controverted by several professors of the universities in America, and they fully exposed the fallacy. If you are going to take away the unearned increment—that is to say, all the earnings that the land may produce—by taxation, you are simply preventing the land being brought into cultivation at all. It is a well-known principle of economics that anything that renders it inadvisable to invest capital in landed property, either in

purchase or cultivation, must necessarily be injurious to the whole community; and, unquestionably, the passing of this Bill will do more harm than good. I cannot see, myself, where there is really any difference between landed property and any other kind of property. I do not think any one has ever established that there is any difference in respect to exchange-value between land and any other kind of property. In certain respects land differs from other kinds of property, but this is an abstract question which has, I know, very much influenced a considerable number of persons in this country who think that by adopting land-nationalisation they will succeed in abolishing the poverty which unfortunately exists in the world. I believe they are entirely mistaken, and I think it is perfectly easy to prove they are wrong, even admitting that all large properties are an evil, which does not by any means follow. It is quite true that there may be some large properties which may impede settlement; but I should like to point out that, even supposing this was an evil, which I quite admit might occur in some places, yet even this evil is one which time will cure. There are constantly changes taking place in regard to property; the owners die, and their property is distributed amongst their families, and in the course of a very short time all that this Bill seeks to do by violence will be done in a natural and harmless manner. I would also point out that the present Act would enable the Government to purchase these properties in a very great number of cases. It is true the Hon. Mr. Montgomery pointed out that a very considerable number of properties had been offered at a price which seemed too high to justify the Government in purchasing them; but we know that in all cases of buying and selling the seller makes an offer demanding a considerable sum, which, after a time, if he finds he cannot get, he is perfectly willing to reduce; and it is therefore no argument to say that, because lands were refused at first under the present Act, therefore the Government would not be able to purchase the lands in the future. It is notorious that lands which are offered in one year at a high price constantly come into the market at a very much lower price the next year, and there are always occasions on which large quantities of land are forced into the market in various ways. The owners require money; they can no longer carry on and pay interest, and are compelled to get rid of their properties at any price. But this is a very different thing from forcibly taking the properties. I admit that this Bill is an improvement upon the Bill we threw out in 1891, when it was proposed that the Government might, if they chose, purchase a portion of a man's property—might, in fact, as I said at that time, spot and gridiron the property as they chose, and leave the owner with the very worst part of the property—the high land which he could not work alone, or the low land on which there was no water—and in other ways destroy the value of what was

left. I am glad to see the Bill has been amended in another place in this direction, and that it is now optional on the part of the owner, and, if the Government choose to make an offer for his land, he can insist on their purchasing the whole of it. This is certainly an improvement, and will remove a certain amount of injustice, although, at the same time, there is this difficulty: that in many cases, especially in Hawke's Bay, there are properties which are quite separate, many miles very often apart, yet are worked together in this way: that on the property in the most available part of the country, in some cases near Hastings for instance, where communication with the port is easy, the shearing is done there: large buildings and shearing-sheds, and so forth, and a considerable amount of plant, are placed there; and the value of the smaller property really depends on the larger property worked in-connection with it; so that, if the Government chose to take the larger property by compulsion, the smaller property, having all the plant for working the large property, being left on a man's hands, it is the same as if you left a part of a homogeneous property after a part had been taken by the State. That seems to be an injustice. I do not know how we can remedy it. But it is a most unjust thing that we should really take what is really a portion of the same property, although not geographically connected, and leave the owner to bear the loss which arises from the separation of his property. Apart from this, I should like to know, under this proposal for taking land, how many people would really be settled in any one year under this Act. Taking the return of lands for settlement as a guide, I find that 4,000 acres of land at Pomahaka averaged £3 10s. per acre in price. Taking the farms averaging 200 acres, that would give 250 settlers for £250,000 proposed to be spent in one year. Is it really worth while to destroy all sense of security in the country, and to put this country into this extraordinary position, for the sake of settling 250 persons in the course of a year? And how many of these persons would occupy land by going on in the ordinary course of things and purchasing land where it is open for sale! So, after all, the total number of settlers might be reduced to fifty; and all this disturbance is to be brought about for the sake of settling possibly fifty persons! We are going to disturb and unsettle the property of the country, and put every one in a state of suspense, for the sake of settling not 1 per cent., but one out of two thousand in the country. The effect of this Bill is, of course, as has been said, practically to abolish the freehold tenure. No man feels safe; and, although at present it is confined to large owners, there is no reason why before long it should not affect the smaller ones. It is said that, after all, no man is really injured by having his land taken from him under the Bill, because he is compensated for it; but what is the meaning of this compensation? Does it mean that he really gets the value of his

property—that he really gets the full market price? When a man is about to sell any property, he looks about him, and does his best to sell it when the particular property will fetch a good price in the market. But under this system it will be the duty of the Board, as a matter of business, to wait till the property is depreciated as much as possible, and to buy it at a reduced value. We all know that all property, and landed property especially, varies materially in value from year to year, partly owing to the want of demand for that description of property, and partly owing to the variation in the price of the produce which comes from it. I remember, only last year, there was a property offered to a friend of mine for £7,000—a well-improved property, stocked, and in a good position—and he considered it a very reasonable price, and was inclined to buy it. However, on inquiry he found he had not quite sufficient capital to justify the purchase, and he consequently declined to take it. Well, a few months ago the same property was offered for £5,000: and no doubt it could be bought for £4,000. The effect already of this Bill has been to reduce the demand for land very considerably. Only the other day I was at the office of the Loan and Mercantile Agency Company, and the manager informed me that the demand for land had fallen off very considerably; people will not touch land unless they get it at an exceptionally low price; there is a general fear and want of confidence—a fear of confiscation—and people are simply afraid to buy landed property at all. Well, Sir, suppose this principle of the buyer fixing the value to be applied to other kinds of property; suppose you insisted on buying the stock in a merchant's store at your price, and not at the price he was willing to sell at; suppose you do the same with the shopkeeper, or with any joint-stock company. If a shareholder in any joint-stock company were forced to part with shares at a time when they were at a discount he would get practically nothing for them. This does not apply to the same extent in connection with land, but it does apply to a large extent, and it must necessarily bring about hardship and injustice. It is totally different in connection with the purchase of small quantities of land for roads and railways, where, in the first place, the amount is very small, and, in the second place, the compensation is always based not on the value of the land, but on the indirect injury it may do to the property, and is always computed in a liberal manner, to avoid anything like confiscation. Of course, at present only those who have 1,000 acres of land are to be attacked in this manner, or those who have 2,000 acres of second-class land, and so on. This is to a certain extent a protection: but it is quite clear that if this principle is once admitted there is no reason why the Act should not very soon be altered to a lower quantity—say, 500 acres, 100 acres, 50 acres, or down to a quarter-acre section. The Bill was originally introduced in 1891 in that form, but the thing was found to be unpopular in the country. The feeling was strong against it, and an amendment

Hon. Mr. Pharazyn

was made, I think, in the Select Committee to which the Bill was referred—moved, I believe, by Sir Robert Stout—that land up to 1,000 acres should be protected from interference. I am glad to see that has been adhered to; but it is quite clear that this is only a temporary resting-place. We are on a slide, and, directly there are a large number of small farmers who have land under the Act, either the new farmers or existing ones who have small quantities of land will be attacked in their turn. Population, as the honourable gentleman said, will go on increasing, and there will be constant pressure in the same direction, and those who have not land will insist on having land belonging to their neighbours, and the whole exemption will be swept away, unless the country learns its lesson and this temporary madness disappears. This is so clear that it appears to me that every man, however small a landowner he may be, ought to look at the question from this point of view: namely, that, although at present only large landowners are to be got at, the smaller owners are certain to be ultimately in the same position. When the wandering Ulysses and his twelve companions found themselves prisoners in the cave of the one-eyed Cyclops, Polyphemus, Ulysses petitioned the giant for some gift in return for the wine he had given him. To this Polyphemus replied, “Ulysses shall be the last of his band whom I will eat; the rest will I devour before him. Let this respite be my gift.” Now, Sir, that is the kind of position that these people will be in. They are to be eaten last. The smaller owners must know perfectly well that it is only a question of time when they will be treated in exactly the same way as the larger owners are now about to be treated. I hope the country will realise that, and when this Bill is put into operation we shall see that the country will take the same alarm as it did when the Bill appeared first, when every small owner was liable to have his land taken from him, and that some modification of this will take place. It is notorious that the Government were afraid at the time to carry that Bill. They knew perfectly well that the country was against the Bill in its original form, and that it was quite impossible to thrust such a thing as that down the throats of the electors; and they very wisely consented to this modification: to make, at least, areas of a thousand acres free from the operation of this measure. We have seen even in the present session, as I think my honourable friend Mr. Oliver pointed out, that the retention of the thousand-acre limit was given up in the most easy way, and reduced to five hundred acres in the case of lands within a five-mile radius of the large towns. It is quite on the cards that an agitation will arise for having the same radius applied to the smaller towns. We shall have all the smaller towns making the same demand, and insisting, possibly next session, possibly even this session, upon having the area of holdings within a four miles’ radius, or less, reduced to a very small quantity of land. That

is quite within the range of ordinary political action. Then, of course, the honourable gentleman tells us that one of the objects of this Bill is to remove the “unemployed” difficulty. Can anything be more utterly disastrous to labour than the feeling of insecurity produced under this Bill? What employer will venture to improve his property, with a sword of Damocles hanging over his head, which may at any time fall and deprive him of the possession of it? He knows that, while the land may be taken from him, although he may receive nominal compensation his improvements will be totally lost. I know a case which was told me by a gentleman at Feilding, who owns something under three thousand acres of land. His manager had recommended him to make certain improvements, because there were a great number of the unemployed in the district, and had suggested it was a good time to employ fifty of these men in making the improvements. The Premier went up to the district about this time and made a speech, in which he referred to the large estates in the district, and said these were the sort of properties that were to be dealt with by this Bill and distributed among smaller farmers. The result was that the owner of the particular property I have referred to stopped his manager from making the contemplated improvements, and therefore the fifty or sixty men who would otherwise have been employed lost their chance of employment. That is the kind of thing that is going on more or less all over the country, and which will go on to a still greater extent if this Bill becomes law. Then, we know that recent legislation has in various ways lowered the value of land. The land-tax and the graduated tax have lowered the value of land, and the consequence is that the Government, having really by its own action lowered the value of land, is now proceeding forcibly to buy the land at the reduced value which its own action has caused. Can anything be more unjust than that? Then, there is another curious effect, because, as we all know, legislation constantly produces far greater effects in unforeseen directions than in directions that are foreseen. It is this: There are a considerable number of small owners in different parts of the country who are not very successful, and who are very glad to sell out to the large capitalist. Any one who chooses to go up into the bush-country where small settlers are settled in order to buy sections will find that he is immediately pestered by them, wanting him to buy their sections. A considerable number of them are glad to have the chance of selling to any man who has just come to the district with money. They want to find a purchaser for their improved sections in order to go to other places where they may possibly do better by starting afresh, having spent a certain amount of time and labour in this particular locality; and it is a great advantage to these people to sell in this way. But under this Bill every one of these small proprietors will simply have to remain where he is. If a man buys a section he will

not be able to sell it again. We destroy the market for the small owners which exists at the present time. That will be felt by a very large number of people in this country, because, after all, the land will be either cut up into small areas or aggregated into large ones, just as the quantity of money possessed by the various persons, and other economic conditions, may determine. It is purely a matter of business. We have no sentimental notions in regard to the value to be attached to land. We have none of the aristocratic notion which prevails at Home, that the mere fact of possessing land gives a kind of social status. In the Mother-country manufacturers are quite content to buy land when they have made a fortune in business, in order to become country gentlemen, although they may know they will only derive a return of 2 per cent. on their investment, or may actually make a loss, by the purchase of the property. Here it is not so. A man puts his money into land, or into business, because he expects to get a good return from it; and anything which diminishes the value of land, and affects the large owner, will still more mischievously affect the small one. Of course, too, it will put a stop to the investment of foreign capital. No English investor will care to put his money into land in a country where the land is at the mercy of the State, and may be taken by a so-called system of compensation. He will simply not come to New Zealand; and, depend upon it, every man who is bought out compulsorily will be a centre of disaffection in the country. He will write to a dozen others in England, and will agitate in every possible way, advising people not to have anything to do with a country in which property is so insecure. And the driving of capital out of the country by the operation of the Bill will be far more injurious than any possible advantage that may accrue from having smaller settlement under it will compensate us for. Then, Sir, as to the financial question, I will not go into that very much, because it has already been discussed, and, of course, a good deal of it is matter of speculation. But I noticed that, although a million and a quarter is to be borrowed under this Bill during the five years of its operation, and although the money is to be borrowed at the rate of £250,000 a year, it is quite possible that, though only £250,000 a year may be raised and spent, a further sum may be anticipated; negotiations may go on for the expenditure of a far larger sum.

The Hon. Sir P. A. BUCKLEY.—It cannot possibly be so.

The Hon. Mr. PHARAZYN.—Well, Sir, the Attorney-General is a lawyer, and he may be quite right; but we know when money is to be spent very largely there is a great temptation to spend it. In this case, however, supposing £250,000 a year is to be borrowed and spent, as may easily be done, what guarantee is there this will lead to good investments for the country? It is suggestive that the Minister takes power to reduce the rents under this Bill. Now, if this scheme fails to be so thoroughly suc-

cessful in its financial operation as the Government anticipate, there will be a considerable falling-off in the rentals, and they will have to make a reduction, and, instead of there being a profit of 5 per cent., there may be a loss of 2 or 3 per cent. It requires very careful consideration. It is simply an addition to the liability of the colony, and the money will have to be taken out of the colonial taxation. Under this Bill it seems to be hoped by the Government, or, at any rate, by many of their supporters, that the Government will become the universal landlord. If the Government does become the universal landlord, it will be saddled with all the liabilities of a landlord. The Government will in bad times have to make reductions of rent; it will have all the complications which ordinary landlords have with its tenants; and, in addition to that, it will be subject to the very serious political pressure which is brought to bear on every State department. We have seen it before now in the Fair Rent Bill which was introduced into the Council, and there is a very heavy loss of revenue in consequence. I do not know what it amounts to, but it was a very large sum. It can easily be ascertained by turning up the reports of the Lands and Survey Department. Well, Sir, serious as that loss is,—and I believe it will be a very serious loss, and it may be an enormous loss,—it is less serious than the injury it will do to the character of our people; the moral effect it will have will be exceedingly mischievous; it will encourage a large number of people to rely entirely on the Government. They will not have the energy and push of the old settlers; they will, consequently, look to the Government to assist them first of all in taking up land, and then in doing all kinds of things to enable them to get something out of it. The case of the Cheviot has been referred to as a great success. In the first place, it has not been in existence long enough for us to be able to affirm that; and in the second place, whatever success may seem to have arisen from the Cheviot at the present moment is due to the fact that a very large Government expenditure has taken place there. The Government has been spending £25,000 or £30,000 in labour, and that has been distributed among the people on the spot, and it will account for the prosperity of the population there. I quite agree with my honourable friend Mr. Oliver, who pointed out that it was very doubtful whether the total return from that property in the future will ever be so great as in the past. Some twenty-five thousand pounds' worth of produce was raised yearly from Cheviot, and that would have been an increasing production, but it is doubtful whether as large an amount will be obtained from Cheviot now as when it formed one large property. In another place it was seriously argued that it was a great hardship for farmers' sons in the South to have to come up to the North Island and endeavour to make homesteads here. This was referred to by my honourable friend Sir George Whitmore, who

Hon. Mr. Pharazyn

dealt with these spoilt children. Just fancy young men going to the Minister of Lands crying for somebody-else's land, because they are afraid of crossing the Strait to the North Island, as in the passage they might be sea-sick! They would have to come and see their friends at the risk of sea-sickness! They would have to cross that terrible Cook Strait.

An Hon. MEMBER.—What about the Maoris?

The Hon. Mr. PHARAZYN.—The old Maoris used to be a great deal pluckier. They used to go across in their canoes. I hope that these people are not such mollycoddles as to be afraid to go to sea because of sea-sickness, but that they have something of the pluck of the old settlers, who had to drive their stock hundreds of miles through all sorts of country, and had to make homes for themselves where the country seemed to offer them a chance of success. Sir, if this sort of thing goes on we may wonder where we are to get our men from. If I may be allowed to use an Irish "bull," I might say we shall soon have to look for our men amongst our women. That is the only chance. We shall turn our young men into something less than the average girl as regards courage and enterprise. Well, I maintain that, if we want to do this thing as a matter of business, the present Act is amply sufficient to do all that is required. The land belonging to some of those large companies might be purchased, as could some of the larger properties that are already in the market, and you might go on without occasioning any disturbance or fear. You might go on under the present Act with the increased power given by the alteration from £50,000 a year to £250,000. You might purchase all that is required without mischief being done. It is true you might, in some cases, have to give more for the land than might be given under this Bill; but it seems to me that in all these land-purchase schemes there is an element of robbery. The advocates of the compulsory taking of land are never quite satisfied unless there is a certain amount of downright robbery in it. If it is a mere bargain, and the land is bought at the market price, that is not satisfactory: you must get it at something less. And then they pride themselves upon having obtained the unearned increment; but they forget that the unearned increment, if there is such a thing, goes to the man who makes it by first selling his land. Well, I suppose the new Liberal is never happy unless he is compelling somebody to do something he does not like, in order to allow somebody else to do something, when he would have been much better off if he had left it alone. I admit, Sir, that there is a sort of demand in the country for this measure. There are always lots of Ahabs and Jezebels in any community who covet Naboth's vineyard. These people have been agitating for this for a considerable time, and they are encouraged by a certain class of people to persist in this greed for their neighbours' land. My only wonder now is that there is not a clause in the schedule of the Bill to this effect:

"The Tenth Commandment is hereby repealed." That would be consistent with the whole spirit of the Bill.

The Hon. Sir P. A. BUCKLEY.—What is the tenth commandment?

The Hon. Mr. PHARAZYN.—"Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife, . . . nor anything that is thy neighbour's," and I suppose that includes land. My honourable friend seems to be a little hazy about the Tenth Commandment, and possibly about others. It used to be considered the duty of a Government to protect properties, small or large, from all who coveted them. Now the reverse is the case. It seems to be considered the duty of the Government to encourage people to covet their neighbours' goods. Sir, how can we expect patriotism in any community where this feeling exists? Men will be no better off in this country, if this Bill becomes law, than they would be if an enemy were to take possession of it forcibly, because, in these civilised times, private property would then be as fairly dealt with as it would be under this Bill. It will utterly destroy all patriotism. It will place the country in this position: that any man will be perfectly willing to place himself under the rule of a foreign country, when he might be able to protect his freehold in a more effective manner than he could under a New Zealand Government, if this Bill becomes law. I consider this to be a very serious question. It is cutting at the root of anything like security, and of anything like a feeling that a man and his family are certain to possess and inherit land which has once been his. Can anything be more destructive of family-life? It does seem to me a serious thing to attack one of the most fundamental institutions of society—the possession of property in land. Land has always been considered one of the most secure kinds of property that could possibly exist; and, after all, whatever may be said about land, it is quite clear that, whatever any one may wish, they cannot possibly take it out of the country. Other things may be taken away and destroyed, but the land must remain in the possession of the country: and, for all practical purposes, what is required is that the greatest profit may be made out of the land. I contend that by leaving land in complete and secure possession of the individual you enable the country as a whole to get the greatest possible amount of good out of it, and to have a greater number of people employed than you could possibly do if you shake that feeling of security which enables a man to look forward to the future as long as he works honestly in the present. After what I have said, the logical conclusion might be expected to be that I should move that this Bill be read a second time this day six months. If the fate of this Bill depended upon my vote, if I could persuade this Council, — if this Council were like the American Senate, and could afford to do what was right without consideration for its own safety, — I would not hesitate to refer this Bill back again to the country. Although I think the country has in a sort of way agreed

to the measure, and we find it has passed by an enormous majority in another place, I do not believe the country really has ever considered the thing in that careful way which would enable it to arrive at a rational opinion upon it. It has only been in a general way before the country. The people have an idea they would like to get land in places most convenient to themselves, and they have never looked at the question from any point of view but the immediate present—they have not looked to the future; and had the Bill been before the country in the way it has been placed before this Legislature, I very much doubt whether the country as a whole would have agreed to it. Under these circumstances, and knowing that we are really in this position: that we are threatened that if we do not pass this Bill this session we shall be swamped by fresh members who will pass it—that was clearly laid down when the Bill was passed hurriedly in order to give the Minister an opportunity of putting other members in this place if we rejected it.

The Hon. Sir P. A. BUCKLEY.—There is not the slightest foundation for the statement which my honourable friend makes—not a shadow of foundation, and wherever he has got his information it is absolutely incorrect.

The Hon. Mr. PHARAZYN.—I simply repeat the statement, Sir, of the Hon. the Minister of Lands as it has been reported in *Hansard*.

The Hon. the SPEAKER.—The honourable member should not refer to what occurred in another place.

The Hon. Mr. PHARAZYN.—Well, Sir, the statement was made in such a definite form that I thought it was allowable to refer to matters of that kind in another place when they are of such importance. I know of several occasions when threats of the same kind were referred to in the House of Lords, and it was not considered improper to do so—when it was a matter in which action was likely to be taken. I say that this was more than a mere newspaper report. It is in the pages of *Hansard*.

The Hon. Sir P. A. BUCKLEY.—I think, Sir, the honourable gentleman is trenching on ground which he is not entitled to. I have already told the honourable gentleman that there is no authority for the statement, and he repeats it. I have no desire to prevent his referring to what has taken place in another branch of the Legislature. I do not know where the honourable gentleman got his information, but it was probably in some place where the wish may have been father to the thought. But I can say that the Government never had any such intention.

The Hon. Mr. PHARAZYN.—I think it will be found in No. 13 of *Hansard*: and my impression is that is the position in which we are placed. Under these circumstances, I know it is quite hopeless to deal with this Bill as I should like to deal with it if we had the power. I think, possibly, we might modify it in the direction suggested by the Hon. Mr. Oliver, but I have very little hope of carrying even that

absolutely innocent modification—that is to say, in the direction of reducing the amount of land that may be held under this Act when it is taken from the rich owner. I think the course which was taken in the English Act—namely, the Lands for Allotment Act—might very well have been followed in this country. In that Act, as has been explained by the Hon. Mr. Oliver, every possible precaution was taken to prevent any injustice being done. I have looked up that Act myself, and I can say that the Hon. Mr. Oliver was perfectly correct in all the statements he made with regard to it. The contrast between that Act and the Bill now before us is something very remarkable. If the country has to buy its experience in this matter, as in others, it will have to pay an enormous price for it. I quite admit that a few may gain, but a great many more will lose. It is difficult to say who may gain and who may lose. It is quite on the cards that there will be a great deal of jobbery—I do not say on the part of the Government, but indirectly—in carrying out this Bill. We shall have persons who are anxious to get rid of their properties doing so in a manner very satisfactory to themselves. On the other hand, we shall now and then have some unfortunate man who will be injured by the taking of his land, which has depreciated in value, under circumstances absolutely ruinous to him. For instance, there may be a mortgage on his property, and there may be a very small margin of profit, and time may not be given him to take advantage of the best possible market for the land. I think, the whole tendency of this Bill will be mischievous, and it will raise a very bitter feeling among those unjustly treated under it; and, if carried out in the way in which it may be carried out, not only will it produce very general injury throughout the colony to the class of large landowners, but also to all classes of the community, and especially to the working-classes: they, I believe, will be the most serious sufferers under it in the long-run. It will also have a very serious effect upon the credit and character of the colony, for the feeling in other countries will be that the democracy is not to be trusted, that it is absolutely indifferent to the rights of property, and that, if this action is now taken in tearing up the Crown grants to property as contemplated in this Bill, no property is safe. If the Bill is carried out as it may be carried out, the democracy of New Zealand will become a by-word for shortsighted folly, injustice, and dishonesty throughout the civilised world.

The Hon. Mr. RIGG.—Sir, I notice that, so far as the debate has gone, the practice has been to speak against the Bill and to state that you intend to vote for it. That being the case, the proper thing for me to do would be to speak in favour of the Bill and then vote against it. I think that would be the proper way, because it seems to be the correct thing to do exactly the reverse of what would be done under ordinary circumstances. I hardly expected the serious debate that has taken place on this question. I rather thought that the

Hon. Mr. Pharazyn

Council would have taken the same view of this Land for Settlements Bill that it did take with regard to the Arbitration and Conciliation Bill—that is, that it would make a virtue of necessity and pass the measure. I thought that it would have acted in the same generous way that it did on that occasion—namely, pass the Bill with little or no debate, and with no vexatious amendments. But it seems it is not to be so in this case. I rise principally for the purpose of referring to one or two of the remarks of the speakers who have preceded me. I am quite willing to admit that I did not hear the whole of the speeches, and for a very good reason. There was a sort of solemn stillness hanging over this chamber during the afternoon. The gentle boring of the speakers had induced a feeling of somnolence. Two honourable gentlemen were asleep,—one of them with his mouth open,—and others were nodding. That being so, I went outside to satisfy myself that I was awake. In referring to the remarks made by honourable gentlemen, I shall endeavour to do so fairly. The Hon. Mr. Oliver stated that under this land for Settlements Bill a man could not feel himself secure in the possession of what he looked upon as his own. That was the effect of his words. Well, Sir, it would never do that, simply because a man looks upon a thing as his own, he should retain possession of it. It must be, first of all, that he has rightly obtained it, and also that he has a right to own it, and that it is a thing that can be owned in that sense. This desire to call a thing one's own it is that makes the landowner say, when he looks at his land and his flocks, "My homestead, my land, my flocks, my birds, my men." That is the feeling; and it is a wrong one. He does not own the men. I am quite willing to admit that a man can own property, and it may be a surprise to some honourable gentlemen in this Council to hear that I believe in the ownership of private property; but, then, it must be property that a man has earned by his labour—at any rate, property that he can conscientiously hold as against other persons. Take, for instance, a nomadic race—a people who live by hunting. No one will deny that a man who captures an animal that is to form his food has a perfect right to that food; and so, I say, whatever a man gains by his labour he is entitled to. So far, the ownership of private property is desirable, which admission carries with it the approval of many of the remarks which the Hon. Mr. Pharazyn made in the particularly happy speech he has just delivered, because his arguments in a great measure were in support of the kind of private property a man should properly hold. The reason a man should not hold land as private property other than for the purpose of making the fullest use of it is this: Land is limited in quantity; it is the source of all wealth, the source of all life, and there is no man that lives who can create even the smallest portion of it. Yet, at the same time, we must not admit that it is right that a man should retain possession of a large area of land no matter by what means

he obtained it: he may have obtained it for a blanket, or a bottle of rum; but why should he say, "This land is mine; I am not working it, but I am going to hold it for speculative purposes, and no matter what minerals it contains, no matter how much it may be desired by those who are willing to make use of it, they shall not touch it, because it is my own"? That is the position of those who are in favour of land-monopoly; and that is the principle that I oppose—not the ownership of private property as rightly understood. Then, the Hon. Mr. Oliver told us that the present depression that exists in this colony is due to the fact that no one in the country feels secure, owing to the legislation that is being introduced. Now, if that were so, we should expect to find that this depression, which, he poetically said, "has been hanging over us like a heavy pall," is confined to this particular part of the world. But, Sir, when we look around we see that it is not confined to any particular part of the world, but affects almost the whole of it. I think, therefore, to charge the depression which affects a great portion of the world to the effects of a measure of this kind, passed in a small out-of-the-way country like New Zealand, is absurd. I think I explained to the Council not very long ago, when speaking on the currency question, that there was another and greater reason for this depression. It seems evident that the honourable gentleman did not follow my remarks, or that he did not understand them. The Hon. Mr. Pharazyn surprised me when he remarked that the unearned increment of land was a fallacy. Sir, I always understood—I do not know why—that the honourable gentleman was a great admirer of the late John Stuart Mill. Now, John Stuart Mill was the gentleman who invented the term "the unearned increment of land." Not only did John Stuart Mill accept the fact that there is an unearned increment of land, but long before his time it was recognised and laid down by Ricardo in his "theory of rent." If there is no unearned increment of land, then the Ricardian theory of rent, which has been accepted for so many years by all economists, falls to the ground. It must stand to reason that, so long as the productive capacity of one portion of land is greater than that of another, and the difference is not due to any expenditure of capital and labour or to other similar causes, it is due to some operation of a law of nature. Here we have an increment that is unearned, and it is only right that this difference should be obtained for the benefit of the State, for otherwise the owner has obtained something that he has not earned. The honourable gentleman also referred to the single-tax. I am not a single-taxer, but I go this far with the single-taxers: I believe that there is an unearned increment on land, and that that unearned increment should be the property of the State. The only question is as to the best means of obtaining this unearned increment for the State. It seems to me that it might be done, and done very simply, by the Government establishing

a special department for the sale of land, and providing that all land should be sold through that department. Then, there should be a special valuation of the lands of the colony for the purpose of ascertaining the present full unimproved values, and, in case of their future sale, the sole price the seller of the land should obtain should be the price fixed by that valuation, with the value of his improvements added. It seems to me, if that were the case, a certain quantity of land which was worth, say, £100 unimproved would only mean to the owner, so long as he held that land, a value amounting to £100. If simply by reason of a demand for the land an increased value was given up to, say, £150, the State would sell the land, if requested by the person holding it, paying him the £100, and taking the other £50 to pay the expenses of the sale, and for the purposes of the State. That seems to me a perfectly fair way of dealing with this unearned increment of land, and then we should not have the objectionable feature that there is in the single-tax, which is really going to tax a man to such an extent as to make him give up the possession of his land because he cannot pay the taxation. At the same time, it would secure to the holder what he has a perfect right to expect—that is, what he gives for the land in the first instance. It would be unfair to go back to the prairie value of land, and then say that any increase on that unimproved value is unearned increment and should be taken by the State. That would be wrong and impracticable. But to start from the present time and say that any future increment of the unimproved value of land should belong to the State seems to me to be not only right, but just and proper. But even if such a department were established as I have suggested, it requires something yet to complete the mode of dealing with the land, and this, Sir, I find in the measure now before us. It is just possible that those who hold large areas of land might still feel disposed to hold those large areas when they might be required for settlement purposes, and therefore it is very necessary to go a little further than leaving it to the option of the holder as to whether he shall sell or not. In this respect the present measure provides all that is necessary. Now, Sir, I intend to vote in favour of this Bill. Last year I supported the principles of the measure then before us, which was not half so complete or so good as the one before us at present. That being so, approving as I did of the principle contained in a Bill inferior to that which is before us, I feel bound to support this Bill, and I do so heartily. At the same time, I think the provisions of the Bill are perfectly fair and just. The proprietor of the land is, in the first place, protected to such an extent that, if he so desires, he can retain a very nice place, sufficient for his wants and those of his family. It only deals with the surplus land. Then, again, the land cannot be, as the Hon. Mr. Pharazyn says, robbed from the holder, because it is not the Government who will fix the value of the

land required; but, if it should be so desired by the holder, the value may be fixed by a Supreme Court Judge and by two Assessors—one in the interest of the person owning the land. This being so, it seems to me to be so fair that I cannot understand any opposition to the measure. The old objection about picking the eyes out of a man's property is done away with. Under this the owner of the land has the right to say to the Government, "If you take any you shall take the lot,"—which seems to me proper and right. The area of land to be held is the same as proposed last year—a thousand acres of first-class land, two thousand acres of second-class land, and five thousand acres of third-class land. This being so, I think the area excepted is quite sufficient for any one who desires to hold the land for use and not merely for purposes of speculation, and therefore the measure should be satisfactory to everybody.

The Hon. Mr. STEVENS.—Sir, my principal object in making a few observations on the present occasion is to state what appears to me to be the true position of the Council in regard to the measure. This is the fourth occasion on which a measure of this character has come before the Council. In 1891 compulsory taking was introduced in the Bill of that year, which was rejected by this Council. In 1892 a Bill containing the voluntary principle was introduced, and the Council accepted that Bill, giving the Government power to acquire from the owner, by mutual consent, property they thought fit for settlement. Last year the compulsory principle came up again in the Bill that was presented, and the Council again rejected it. Now, it seems to me that the point to consider with regard to our constitutional position in regard to this measure is this: Has there been a sufficient appearance, at any rate, of expression of opinion in the country in favour of this measure to justify us in accepting it in the face of our previous decision, and irrespective of the views we entertain in regard to this provision? I must say that it appears to me that, although there may not have been extreme prominence given to the intention of this measure at the recent or previous elections, nevertheless the principle of compulsory taking of land for settlement purposes has been now for several years before the country, and the return to power of those holding this view must be considered as a sufficient declaration in favour of the principle on the part of the constituencies. Therefore, although I hold that there cannot be anything worse in the way of legislation than a general assertion of the principle that private land should be taken for the purpose of being cut up and divided amongst other colonists in this country, or amongst those who may be at present in any other country, I nevertheless cannot disguise from myself the fact that it has been accepted by the country, and therefore should be permitted to pass this Council: and for no other reason. This I desire most particularly to emphasize, because, if a protest against this measure were necessary, I should be one of those

Hon. Mr. Rigg

who would most cheerfully join in it. In view of the position I think we should take up, it is obvious that any discussion of the principle of the measure would be out of place. That we have discussed in years gone by; and, if we decide that we have to accept the principle, what is the use of now discussing the general question of whether it is desirable or right, or anything of the kind? It appears to me that we should devote ourselves to going as loyally as we can, and as closely as we can, to the application of the principle which has been accepted. In this connection, let me say that from the remarks I have heard made by my honourable friend in introducing the Bill, and from reading the speeches and declarations of Ministers and others who support it, I am seriously afraid that an entirely wrong view of what should be done under a provision of this kind is the one which obtains. My honourable friend said it was the object to take large estates. What is the object of taking large estates? I have heard people in the towns saying that great estates are the ruin of the country. But it is not the size of the estates, it is their suitableness for settlement that is the key of the whole question. I tell my honourable friends, if they run off in pursuit of this Will-o'-the-wisp, their policy will be a failure, and there will be no element of success either in the near or distant future. What is the real justification—if there be any justification—for taking the property or land of some in this country and dividing it among others if it be not that it is thoroughly effective for providing homes for those whom it proposes to place on them? When I say "home" I do not mean merely a place where a person may exist, but where he can improve his position year by year, and ultimately acquire sufficient provision for his old age. Does my honourable friend mean to say that by taking hill grazing-runs, as suggested, for dairy purposes such a desirable state of things can be secured as that which I have pointed out? Is this the kind of thing? We are invited to look at Cheviot. What has been done there? I have calculated the thing from the Crown Lands Report, and rather more than half the whole acreage has been let in small grazing-runs. Is this settlement? Is there any real advantage, any serious important advantage, in expropriating an individual from property of that character for the purpose of dividing it in small grazing-runs? We are not favoured with a statement as to the precise area of these grazing-runs; they might have been, under the Land Act, anything from five thousand acres to twenty thousand acres. What does this point to? It points, as far as my views are concerned, to this: that everything depends upon quality. You had better, if you have £50,000, or five times as much as that, as is now proposed, buy a comparatively small acreage of first-class land in the neighbourhood of a good market, and with good means of communication, or you had better not buy at all. All experience points in this direction. My own experience has been very long and very con-

siderable, and so has that of many of my friends; and I believe there is scarcely one whom you may call a countryman who would not assent to the views that I have expressed. Will my honourable friend be good enough to consider what has been our experience of settlement on poor land? Has experience with land worth £2 or £3 an acre—distinctly inferior land—been encouraging as a guide as to what should be done in the future? Certainly not; quite the other way. What is our experience? That people who have been on that land for years—steady, hard-working people—have not improved their position one bit; and their position may be pictured in that line, "With the fruitless years behind them, and the hopeless years before them." And that is what will happen, I tell my honourable friends—and I tell it them in a friendly spirit—in no spirit of hostility to that which we have to accept. I most urgently urge on them the importance of confining the settlement of these people to good land in the best districts, with ample means of communication and with good access to markets, and then their money will go a great deal further, and the Government will, at all events, have something to show for their money. It is not my intention to speak at any length, and, really having to accept this policy,—for it has now become a policy, when it has assumed the proportions, we may say, of a million and a quarter,—it seems to me we must do the best we can with it. It is entirely in this spirit that I have ventured to make these few remarks, and I entreat the Government to get rid of the notion they appear to be impressed by, or that they appear to have accepted, that if an estate is a large one, no matter how remote or how unsuitable for settlement it may be, it should be acquired under this Act. Sir, I should like to say one word with regard to the size of the sections. If the view that I have expressed may be accepted, then, as I have pointed out before, very much smaller areas may be taken as the right ones for settlement. It is only when you go away into the country that there is any necessity for large areas. Before I go any further, I would say, by keeping to the first-class land in comparatively settled districts, and near markets, you will open to the settlers immense opportunity for cultivating small industries and all manner of things which are within the application of personal labour—such as spade-labour; and you will give, by this means, a wide opening for the settlement of the unemployed too. But, if you send these people to the country without money, and absolutely without resources of any kind, how can they settle in the districts which are more or less remote from markets—fifty or sixty miles away; and how can you do any good with the "unemployed" question by the medium of this Bill? It is utterly impossible. That is the history of all successful settlement. It has been the history of the settlement in the North Island bush districts. Why are people able to succeed there? Because they have got sections of their own, and

because they are employed by others who have got more money, and this employment provides them with their present means of living, and it enables them to spend a certain quantity of their actual money on their own sections, and become proprietors in a more or less comfortable position. If you send people into remote districts—I do not mean extremely remote, but even as remote as Cheviot—without any access to markets, and there are no people there in possession of capital—if they are only small-grazing-run holders and lease-in-perpetuity men, with six hundred and forty acres, or whatever it may be, how can you expect prosperity? Where is the employment for these people to come from in the earlier stages of their career? I desire to say no more. I think I have expressed with sufficient clearness the views I take, and I ask my honourable friends to consider them, if they wish their policy not to be a failure. The only other thing I would say is that I trust this Bill will go to a Select Committee, as it is in a very unsatisfactory condition. There are contingent interests which are absolutely ignored, and which, I am sure, my honourable friends will protect. They will also, no doubt, accept some limitation of the real or supposed power in the Bill to buy land to an even larger extent than the £250,000 proposed for expenditure in one year, although that is the limit in the Bill. From the remarks I heard my honourable friend make, I assume the Government are willing to accept something in the way of amendment which will make that absolutely safe. Then, there is something in clause 21 which gives the power of remitting a year's rent. The drafting of that clause is such that I doubt whether it will be possible to give effect to it. There is to be a reference to Parliament, and, as this would be a reference in each individual case, it would assume the appearance of an actual absurdity. I think my honourable friends will agree that it is very desirable that this Bill should be carefully examined by the Waste Lands Committee, or some other Committee. With these few remarks, therefore, I will content myself, and, in conclusion, I hope the anticipations of my honourable friends in regard to their measure will be realised, and that to some extent the anticipations of the country, so far as I understand that it forms any anticipations, will be realised. That they will be thoroughly realised seems to be absolutely beyond possibility of hope; but, at all events, we have got to accept it—we ought to accept it, and all I have to say is, let us do all we can, loyally, to make the best of it.

The Hon. Mr. ACLAND.—I merely intend to say a few words with regard to the question of the unearned increment, because I understood one honourable member to say that all land ought to be assessed at its present saleable value, which assessment should never be altered, as any additional value which the land might attain would be unearned increment. That is to say, supposing a tenant or owner is possessed of land which requires draining,

and he goes to heavy expense in draining, or takes upon himself the cost of irrigation, all the value imparted to the land by the improvements he thus effects on the land is simply unearned increment, although it may be done by his own labour, and, if the land is sold afterwards, he is not to receive one single penny in respect of these improvements. Now, that does not seem to me to be a fair description of what ought to be considered unearned increment.

The Hon. Mr. MONTGOMERY.—I just want to say a few words in reply. The Bill, I think, has been very well received. My honourable friend Mr. Stevens recognises that the voice of the country has been heard, and that this Bill will pass, although he does not like it himself. I wish to say something with regard to one of the remarks which fell from the Hon. Mr. Oliver. He has remarked with horror that this Bill is one for the breaking of contracts, and nothing, he imagines, could be worse. He would prefer that the Government should give the owner £1 or £2 an acre for his land more than the ordinary buying and selling price; he thinks it would be better for the Government to spend their money in that way rather than break contracts—that is, than take land from the people who have acquired it legally and properly, by giving fair compensation. Now, Sir, it has never entered the heads of the Government to do anything of the sort. I think they would not be keeping faith with the people of New Zealand if, in the case of very large landowners, who hold immense tracts of country, which are stopping settlement, they would do what the honourable gentleman suggests. Even supposing the people of New Zealand should approve—even if the Government did—of giving these landowners a pound or two more for the land than the market price, it would not be right to do so; and I am sure the Government will not—and that this Council will not—ever agree to that. I noticed that because it was the honourable gentleman's alternative, to get lands for settlement. With regard to the Hon. Mr. Stevens, he says there has been sufficient expression of public opinion, and, as the Government has been chosen and is supported by the representatives of the people largely, that is sufficient reason for the passing of this measure, and that he would therefore—and that this Council should—loyally support the Ministry.

The Hon. Mr. STEVENS.—On this Bill, but not generally.

The Hon. Mr. MONTGOMERY.—The principle of the Bill, I understood you to say. I understood the honourable gentleman to say, with regard to the provisions of the Bill, that, the country having declared itself in favour of the policy of the Government, it is our duty to carry it out. But, when he is advising the Government, and warning the Government against buying large areas and neglecting the buying of first-class land, he really seems to forget that the Minister of Lands himself is a farmer, and that there are some others who will be connected with him in the adminis-

Hon. Mr. Stevens

tration of this Act who also are acquainted with the value and the quality of land. It need not be imagined that they would rush with this £250,000 into the market to buy any kind of land so long as they could get plenty of it: yet that is the whole of the honourable gentleman's argument. And I think he must have imagined that the parties to be placed on the Land Board that is provided by the 3rd clause, and the Minister of Lands of the day, are fools. I do not think they are. I think they know pretty fairly what they are doing.

The Hon. Mr. STEVENS.—It was a very fair inference.

The Hon. Mr. MONTGOMERY.—When my honourable friend was supposing this thing—and he waxed quite warm upon it—he wanted to show it was absolutely necessary to purchase a good quality of land. Why, Sir, everybody knows that; he told us what we all knew, quite well, too. Does the honourable gentleman mean to say we shall go and buy land at £20 and £30 an acre from farmers holding, say, from fifty to three hundred acres? That is not provided by the Bill. There is no good land to be bought except at a good price. Within a moderate distance from the place my honourable friend comes from—Christchurch—there is a property of from seventy to eighty thousand acres—a very fine property indeed—which carries a sheep to the acre.

The Hon. Mr. L. WALKER.—What is the name of it? Glenmark?

The Hon. Mr. MONTGOMERY.—I will not say what is the name. At any rate, there is a property, and there are other properties like it, showing that there is plenty of good land suitable for settlement which could be cut up into small lots. But the Bill provides that a man may say, "If you are going to take a portion of the land you will have to take the whole of it"; and, to meet this, there are provisions in this Bill that, in addition to farm allotments of and below 320 acres, there may be larger allotments of land suitable only for grazing purposes. With great respect to my honourable friend's opinion, I think the Minister of Lands, who has been a farmer all his life, can be trusted to see that the Act is wisely administered. I am sure he will be obliged to the honourable gentleman for the advice given; but I venture to say that he is just as anxious to buy good land suitable for settlement as the honourable gentleman is, and that he has just as good knowledge, perhaps, of the kind of land which is required as my honourable friend has. As to the expenditure being confined to the £250,000 in one year, as I said when moving the second reading of the Bill, there is a clause in it which says that if the whole of the £250,000 is not spent in one year the balance may be spent in the next year, but there is nothing in the Bill to warrant the idea that power is given, and there is no intention on the part of the framers of the Bill, to have an expenditure of more than £250,000 a year for five years. If the Council carries the second reading, I intend to move that the Bill be referred to the Waste Lands Committee, and, if

it is there considered necessary that it should be made more distinct that there shall be no power to exceed an expenditure of £250,000 a year, I may say that there is no objection on the part of the Government to that, as there is no intention to spend more than the £250,000 each year for five years. With these few remarks, I beg to move the second reading of the Bill, and I hope it will be carried.

Bill read the second time.

FACTORIES BILL.

The Hon. Sir P. A. BUCKLEY.—Sir, this is a consolidating measure, and therefore requires very little explanation. It purports to amend defects which those who have had the working of the previous Acts have discovered. There are, however, one or two clauses to which the attention of the Council should be called. There are, besides, several amendments in some of the sections which are really Committee amendments, and which it will be better to explain before the Select Committee to which I propose to send this Bill, as well as before the Committee of the Council, than to enumber the pages of *Hansard* with merely technical remarks. The first matter to which I would call the attention of honourable members is in the interpretation clause, in which the age of a "child" is raised from thirteen to fourteen years. Then, it has been discovered by Inspectors that in many of the small bakehouses in this colony there are irregularities of a kind which are not remediable under the Factories Act. There has been found to be a considerable amount of uncleanness in these houses, which probably a better provision might remedy. And then I cannot, I think, better explain the 28th clause than by reading to the Council an extract from a report of the Department of Labour, which I laid on the table some time ago. It will be found on page 5:—

"Respectable factory-owners, who have to provide rents, fuel, decent buildings, &c., and whose workpeople have short hours, cannot compete in cheapness with those who work under sweating conditions. The only general remedy is to make all workers, if possible, perform their duties in properly-conducted establishments. Some of the homes in which work is done at present are mere dens of dirt and pestilence, from which germs of contagion are scattered broadcast among the public purchasing the goods. If each employer or shopkeeper had to keep a record of the names and addresses of all persons to whom piecework is given out, and if the Inspector of Factories had the right to visit and examine any house in which piecework is executed, much good would result. Public feeling has, however, a great deal to answer for in this matter. So long as the wives and daughters of working-men will buy for cheapness alone, regardless where or how such cheapness is made possible, so long will they continue to sap the interests of their own brothers and sisters, and ultimately injure themselves."

No matter what precaution has been taken under the Factories Act in the past, the

sweaters have been at work in this direction, and, without a provision of the kind referred to in the clause to which I will call attention, it would be utterly impossible to prevent this. The proposal in this clause is to keep a record of the work done in the factory itself, and of the work which is done outside the factory in towns of this kind, where contagion is likely to be spread, so that any persons purchasing an article may know exactly what they are doing. Then, with regard to other clauses to which I think attention should be drawn, one is clause 27—practically a new clause—and that gives Inspectors power to inspect defective machinery in a very careful manner. Clause 28 has reference to fire-escapes, because it has been found that, in places where young girls are at work in factories, they are generally placed on the third or fourth story of the building, and in case of fire there is very little possibility of their escape. The only other clause to which I need refer is clause 52, in reference to accommodation for shearers. That has been considered necessary, because the Inspectors have no power whatever to deal with this question unless some such authority as proposed is given to them. As I said, the Bill is a consolidating measure, and I propose, if the Council will read it the second time, to refer it to the Committee which on former occasions has given so much consideration to this matter—I mean the Labour Bills Committee. I move, *That the Bill be now read the second time.*

The Hon. Mr. JENKINSON.—Sir, I am rather sorry the Colonial Secretary has decided to send this Bill to the Labour Bills Committee without some debate on the measure, because, although it is to a great extent a consolidating Bill, there are in it certain amendments of the present law; and I think, before it goes to the Labour Bills Committee, it would be well to take an expression of opinion from the Council as to some of the provisions contained in it. There is one provision in particular in clause 54 which, I think, would have the effect of shortening the hours in a great many factories to forty-five hours a week, instead of forty-eight as at present. Now, before sending this to a Select Committee to deal with the matter, it would be better, I think, to take an expression from the Council on these matters first, because it may turn out, after the Committee has wasted a great amount of time over the matter, that the Council will reject their proposals afterwards. I remember, in the case of the Industrial Conciliation Bill last year, that this practice was followed. The Bill was sent direct to the Labour Bills Committee, and, after that Committee had been for several days dealing with the question of the Government railways coming under that Bill, when the Bill came back to the Council the Council rejected it. I think that instead of sending the Bill direct to the Labour Bills Committee there should be some expression of opinion from the Council as to the different amendments proposed. There are one or two other points in the Bill which I should like to mention, before

it goes to the Labour Bills Committee. Sub-section (a) of clause 20 provides that a record shall be kept of the names of all persons employed in a factory or workroom, together with the ages of all persons who are under twenty years of age. There is another subsection in this clause to the effect that the particular kind of work engaged in should be recorded; but we should go further and provide that the pay-sheet also of that factory shall be kept and shown to the Inspector of Factories when he demands it. In the last report of the Department of Labour we have about six or seven sheets of tabulated matter which purports to give the wages of the different factories throughout the colony; but those figures are not reliable, and that arises from the fact that the Inspector of Factories got his information simply by making a written request to the factory-owner, asking him what were the wages paid. I say we should give the Factory Inspector power to see that the wages-sheets of these factories are correct, and I should like to see it provided that a record showing the amount that each person employed received should be kept, and that this should be shown to the Inspector on his demand to see such record. In the second part of clause 25 we find it stated,—

“Such report shall not refer by name to any particular occupier of a factory or workroom, or be so framed as to readily admit of the identification of any such occupier, and shall show as nearly as possible the whole number of persons engaged in factories or workrooms in New Zealand subject to this Act, classifying them according to their sex, age, and average weekly earnings.”

How is the Inspector to arrive at these weekly earnings if he has not the power to obtain the pay-sheet of the factory? I think it a most necessary provision to put in the Bill. Clause 27 deals with the question of accidents, and I think I should call attention to it. It seems to be intended in this Bill, as in all other Bills that come before us, to leave out the Government railways. I notice, in the report I have just mentioned, that the number of accidents throughout the colony is mentioned, while the number of accidents that have occurred in the railway workshops is left out of the report. Clause 27 states,—

“The occupier of every factory where machinery is used shall furnish, to the approval of the Inspector, belt-shifters or other safe mechanical contrivances for the purpose of throwing on or off belts or pulleys, and, wherever possible, machinery therein shall be provided with loose pulleys. All vats, pans, saws, planers, cogs, gearing, belting, shafting, set-screws, and machinery of every description in any factory or workroom shall be properly guarded, and no person shall remove or make ineffective any safeguard around or attached to any planer, saw, belting, shafting, or other machinery, or around any vat or pan, while the same is in use, unless for the purpose of immediately making repairs thereto; and all such safeguards shall be promptly replaced.”

Hon. Sir P. A. Buckley

I do not think the railway workshops should be excluded from the provisions of this clause, and therefore I call attention to it. Some of the machines running in the railway workshops are simply man-traps, and it is almost impossible to escape accidents. Accidents occur almost every day of the week, and the Railway Commissioners, who are supposed to appoint Inspectors, have taken no steps. It is also provided that accidents are to be reported to the Department of Labour, and I certainly think, in reference to this clause, that there will be some little trouble arising from the fact of the Inspector of Factories interfering with what is certainly the duty of the Inspector of Machinery. His duties and functions lie in the inspection of the safety of mechanical contrivances, and it certainly appears that the Inspector of Machinery is the right man to deal with this matter. There is another matter I wish to see in this Bill—I think it was promised in another place that it would be put in this Bill—that is with regard to girls selling newspapers. Provision should be made to stop the practice of little girls in their teens running about the streets selling newspapers.

The Hon. Sir P. A. BUCKLEY.—Where does that take place?

The Hon. Mr. JENKINSON.—In Wellington I have seen them selling newspapers in that way. This Factories Bill should also go further and stop the Hallelujah lasses under at least eighteen from piercing into all sorts of places trying to sell the *War Cry*. From what we hear, it also appears that we are going to have another match-factory in New Zealand, and provision should be made so that we shall not have girls running about the streets selling matches. I hope, before we finish with the measure, we shall make an amendment in it in order to prevent any such disgraceful state of affairs as little girls running about the streets selling newspapers and matches, because the street is not the place for them. There is a subsection in clause 63 in regard to which I intend to take action. That is in regard to the question of the Saturday half-holiday.

The Hon. Sir P. A. BUCKLEY.—That will be amended in Committee.

The Hon. Mr. JENKINSON.—I hope it will be, because it appears to me that it is likely to create the impression that the Saturday afternoon is in some cases likely to be denied to the workers in factories. From the second part of the subsection it appears that the Town Council or Board will be able to decide when the factory employes shall be able to get their half-holiday; and it would be unfair to the owner of a factory to have to shut down his fires and stop his machinery for any half-day in the week other than Saturday. There is no factory in the colony where the employes wish to have any other day than Saturday afternoon, and it should not be left in the hands of the local authorities to decide what half-day should be observed by any factory. The Legislature should decide what half-day is to be observed. Let that half-day

be Saturday, and we shall not get into the state of confusion we got into through the Shop-hours Bill, owing to its being left to the local bodies to decide the day. The third paragraph of clause 54 states, "No person shall employ in any factory or workroom any boy under the age of sixteen years for more than forty-five hours in any one week, nor for more than eight hours in any one day." I might point out that this provision in the Bill will certainly, in many factories, reduce the hours for men as well as for boys. In many factories men have to depend very largely upon boys much below the age of sixteen years for assistance in their work. I will mention an instance: Supposing, in any factory where there is a large amount of machinery running, some repairs are required to the machines or boilers, and such repairs can only be effected after hours. Only boys of a less age than sixteen years can possibly get into and around these machines and boilers to effect repairs, and if this clause is put into the Bill it will preclude them from helping. In many cases these boys have to stop behind with the men on Saturday afternoon, and in many cases also on Sundays, in order to effect the repairs necessary to enable a start to be made on Monday morning, and if they were debarred the men could not work, and the factories would have to be closed on the Monday and perhaps Tuesday, thus throwing all the employes out of work. At the present time, I say, there is no necessity for trying to shorten the hours. Scarcely any factory in New Zealand is working full time—many work only three-quarters time; but if this clause goes in the Bill, the hours, and also of course the pay, would be reduced, and the reduced pay would probably continue even when this depression and this glutted state of the labour market has passed over our heads. In some factories we find that the forty-eight hours is made up in five days, or in five days four hours. They do not work the six days a week, and the employes are quite content with the forty-eight hours. For a man getting 6s. 6d. a day for eight hours, if you still further reduce it to forty-five hours a week, and if he has got five or six children, he will not be able to live. In the *Evening Post* I notice some one calling attention to the fact that the Wellington Woollen Mills have decided to effect a 10-per-cent. reduction. The employes of those mills are making, according to that letter, some of them, only 28s.; and this 10-per-cent. reduction means that they will only get 25s.; and if they have to work only forty-five hours a week, what will their wages be? How do we expect them to live? I am opposed to this provision, and I certainly think that this eight hours a day should be altered, and that the forty-five hours a week should be altered to forty-eight. I simply wish to hear the Council's opinion upon the Bill here on the second reading, before it goes to the Committee, and then these matters can be dealt with in the Committee with some likelihood of acceptance by the whole Council.

The Hon. Mr. BONAR.—I think the honourable gentleman has really given us the best of reasons why the Bill should go to the Committee—it is essentially one of detail. I thoroughly agree that many matters he brought forward require a remedy; but it cannot be provided in Committee of the Whole, but must be dealt with by a Committee that will take the trouble to go through the Bill. As far as the Bill is concerned, I do not like it a bit. We are going to legislate ourselves into the hands of a body of Inspectors, and people will not know which way to turn. It may be very easily seen that it will have the effect of reducing wages so that honest workers will not be able to live at all.

Bill read the second time.

The Council adjourned at thirteen minutes to ten o'clock p.m.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.

Tuesday, 28th August, 1894.

Police Uniforms—Addington Workshops Employés—Inspector of Mines' Report—Wairopi Gold-dredging Companies—Waiapu Block—Defences—Christchurch Unemployed—Tariff Rates between Colonies—Ministers' Salaries and Allowances—Traction-engines—Shipping and Seamen's Bill—Shops and Shop-assistants Bill—Supply.

Mr. SPEAKER took the chair at half-past two o'clock.

PRAYERS.

POLICE UNIFORMS.

Mr. G. J. SMITH asked the Government, Whether they will favourably consider the question of providing uniforms for the Police Force of the colony, so as to place that Force on the same footing as other Government departments?

Mr. SEDDON said that what the honourable gentleman asked could not be done. The Permanent Militia, from which force the police were recruited, had to pay for their uniforms, and on being transferred to the Police Force they received an increase of 1s. 6d. per day, and they also participated in rewards. It was not considered necessary to supply them with uniforms, which would entail a considerable outlay. The Police Force, he might point out, were very well paid in comparison with what most persons were earning outside the Force. He was deluged with applications for entrance to the Permanent Artillery, and for transfer to the Police Force; and, if they considered the wages and earnings of working-men and compared them with those of the Police Force it would be seen that the Force was not underpaid. The Government could not supply uniforms to the Force unless they were prepared to find uniforms all round.

ADDINGTON WORKSHOPS EMPLOYÉS.

Mr. COLLINS asked the Government, Why the workmen in the Government workshops at

Addington are now working on short time, and how long this state of affairs is to continue; and if, considering the great hardship entailed upon a most deserving class of men, and in view of the fact that the holiday times are approaching when further demands upon their wages will be made, the Government will see that these men are allowed to work full time, and so prevent many families being plunged into serious financial difficulties? The question was one of very considerable importance to a very large number of men engaged in the workshops. He might mention that the men had now been working on short time for very many months, and he knew personally that great hardships were at present being undergone by many families in consequence of this short time. He knew, further, that many men had entered into certain monetary obligations in respect to the houses they lived in, having undertaken to pay for their cottages on time-payment, and the loss of one day per week, with regard to men who were earning not more than 6s. per diem, was a very serious matter. He hoped, therefore, the Government would be able to give some assurance that this short time would not be continued.

Mr. SEDDON thought the reply he was about to give would be satisfactory. Owing to the falling revenue it had been found necessary to reduce expenditure by working short time in the workshops at Addington. The Commissioners, however, hoped to see their way to resume full time on and after Monday, the 15th October next. He thought the Commissioners were to be commended for the course they had pursued with respect to this matter, in having put the men on short time instead of, as had been done in some instances, discharging a number of men and keeping others on.

Mr. EARNSHAW asked if this only referred to the Addington Workshops.

Mr. SEDDON said the question under reply only referred to Addington. He had not been asked a question with regard to other workshops, but no doubt if such question were asked the Commissioners would reply that, as soon as there was sufficient work to keep the men fully engaged, they would put the men on full time in all the workshops.

INSPECTOR OF MINES' REPORT.

Mr. MORRISON asked the Minister of Mines, If he will take such steps as he may think desirable to furnish the report of the Inspector of Mines to all coal proprietors within a reasonable time—say, three months after inspection? Representations had been made to him by those interested in mines in his constituency that under the present system the reports furnished by the Inspector were absolutely valueless, owing to the length of time that elapsed between the Inspector's visit and the time they were furnished to the proprietor. He felt sure that the intention of the Act was that the reports should be furnished at as early a date as possible, so as to provide for the early removal of any defect in

the management of the mines which the Inspector might think necessary. He asked the question on behalf of the colliery proprietors and mine-managers and miners, who were very much interested in the matter; and he hoped that the Minister of Mines would be able to give him a favourable answer.

Mr. CADMAN said that when the Inspector's reports were received, if the report pointed to any matter that required immediate attention it was immediately attended to; and it was the duty of the Inspector, when inspecting a mine, to notify immediately to the mine-manager, in writing, anything that he considered required attention. If any matter of the kind had been overlooked, and the honourable gentleman would point it out to him, he would have the matter looked into, and see that the Inspectors carried out the intention of the law.

Mr. MORRISON was very thankful to the Minister for his explanation. He might point out that he had known a period of eighteen months to elapse between the visit and the report becoming available, which he considered was much too long.

WAIPORI GOLD-DREDGING COMPANIES.

Mr. LARNACH asked the Government, Whether they are aware of the following facts in connection with the stoppage of the dredges at Waipori?—Jutland Flat Gold-dredging Company: Capital invested, over £4,000; 2,820oz. gold obtained; £3,524 direct wages; 1,300 tons coal consumed; rent and rates to be added; dredge started September, 1891; eleven men constantly employed, of these five are married, with fifteen children between them. Upper Waipori Gold-dredging Company: Capital paid up, £11,000; gold obtained, £250,500; fuel consumed, £5,850; direct wages, £8,600; rent and rates to be added; dredging about four years; eleven men constantly employed, five being married, with twenty-one children. No. 2 Upper Waipori Company's dredge stopped prior to issue of injunction; hands formerly employed compelled to leave the district. The foregoing does not include men who contingently find work in carting coal and material, this being done by contract, and employs a number of men on whom families are depending. There is also a good deal of occasional labour, skilled and otherwise. There are also indirect wages for repairs and renewals (salaries excluded). Direct wages have varied from £120 to £160 per four weeks for each dredge, or, on an average, £300 per month for the two. Direct loss to wage-earners in the district up to date, since stoppage, through idleness of dredges, about £900. Loss to the country from the same cause, a moderate estimate, from £2,000 to £3,000 in gold not won. And whether, under such circumstances, they will press on any legislation necessary to remedy this unfortunate condition of things?

Mr. CADMAN said that, judging from the petitions received by the House, there was no reason to doubt the assertions. With respect

to the latter part of the question, it was debatable, and there was no necessity for his going fully into the matter. The report from the two officers appointed to survey the Waipori Lake had just been received, and he hoped to lay it on the table the following day. The purport of the report was that dredging operations would probably lower the Waipori Lake from 2in. to 3in. The cost of dredging appliances would amount to at least £5,000. The cost of dredging the channels would amount to £10,000. Even were the channels dredged, it was improbable that they would keep clear; and they would be hard to maintain, owing to their great width and shallowness. The only properties that would be benefited would be those on the banks of the Waipori River for one mile up from its mouth, and the slight improvement that could be made in the natural drainage would not justify the expense of cutting the channels. Satisfactory drainage could only be obtained by increasing the present pumping appliances.

WAIKIAU BLOCK.

Mr. PARATA asked the Minister of Lands, Whether it is true that the Government surveyors are now in the field cutting up a portion of the Waikiau Block, Southland, with a view to the Government opening up the same for settlement by Europeans; and whether the portion so being cut up, or so intended to be cut up, is part of the Waikiau Block reserved for landless Natives and half-castes of the South Island?

Mr. J. MCKENZIE said the block of land being opened up for settlement did not in any way interfere with that set aside for the Natives. They were two different blocks altogether.

DEFENCES.

Mr. G. J. SMITH asked the Government, Whether they will give the House an opportunity to discuss the defence system of the colony? It was very evident, from the report presented to the House last year, some reorganization in the defence system was necessary. He had no wish to go into the question fully, because the Standing Orders prevented his bringing up debatable matter; but he hoped the Government would give the House a chance of discussing what was a very important question before asking them to pass the Defence estimates.

Mr. SEDDON said the House would have the fullest opportunity of discussing the question. He hoped to bring the Defence estimates down at an early period—possibly that night; it all depended on the progress made with other classes. The Government were most desirous of having the matter discussed.

CHRISTCHURCH UNEMPLOYED.

Mr. G. J. SMITH asked the Government, Whether, in view of the fact that the local bodies of Christchurch and suburbs do not see their way to vote any sums of money to the Charitable Aid Board for the district to assist

in dealing with the "unemployed" difficulty, the Government propose taking any steps to alleviate the distress that undoubtedly exists; and, if so, will the Government take such steps at once? Since he put the question on the Order Paper the local bodies had contributed certain sums towards the relief of the unemployed, but he thought it was a matter for extreme regret that they had not gone further than they had. He would point out that there were a number of men in a state of absolute destitution. He believed the Government had already done something, and that the Minister would tell the House what had been done since he (Mr. Smith) put the question on the Order Paper; but he hoped something would be done to induce the local bodies to render some further assistance, or that the Government would be able to do something further for these people.

Mr. REEVES agreed with the honourable gentleman that it was a matter for regret that a little more energy—more systematic energy, if he might use the expression—had not been shown in the locality. Had the "unemployed" difficulty been tackled with the same spirit in which it was tackled in Wellington it would have ceased to exist. The Premier and he had arranged at the end of last week that a certain number of the more necessitous cases should be employed on the public works carried on by the Government. They thought that with what the Government were doing, and with what the local bodies were already beginning to do, the serious cases might be at once met. If the public and the other local bodies down there would co-operate in a reasonable way he felt no doubt that the whole thing might be over in a short time.

TARIFF RATES BETWEEN COLONIES.

Mr. W. HUTCHISON asked the Colonial Treasurer, If the Government propose to take any steps to obtain relief from the Imperial legislation of 1873, which prohibits the adoption of certain tariff rates as against importations from one colony to another unless these rates are generally applicable? This was a delicate, because an intercolonial, almost an international, question, and he was prepared to hear the Treasurer answer him with much reserve. He was assured by a gentleman versed in the law that the British legislation did not go the length which his honourable friend supposed—that it did not, at any rate, in the case of New Zealand, do what the honourable gentleman supposed.

Mr. WARD said this was a very important matter. He might say that the Law Officers had reported to the Government—not recently—that there was that power to alter the tariff if its operation were made universal, as he pointed out to the House on a former occasion. He recognised the importance of the subject which had now been submitted to him, and he had submitted the matter to the Law Officers for their advice, and as soon as that was given he would let the honourable gentleman know the result.

Mr. G. J. Smith

MINISTERS' SALARIES AND ALLOWANCES.

Mr. MITCHELSON asked the Premier, If it is the intention of the Government to introduce a Bill this session to amend the Ministers' Salaries and Allowances Act, for the purpose of increasing the salaries paid to Ministers?

Mr. SEDDON said this, perhaps, was not debatable, but it was very personal; but he would say at once that the salaries paid to Ministers in this colony, compared with those paid elsewhere, were very much too low. But it was a very delicate question for Ministers to say whether or not they would themselves bring forward proposals for increasing their own salaries. There had been a feeling, he believed, amongst honourable members that the salaries paid to Ministers were too low, and there was a way in which the House, if it thought fit, could express its views upon any question, and Ministers would prefer that that course should be adopted rather than that the Government should themselves bring down any proposals.

TRACTION-ENGINES.

Mr. McLACHLAN said he had been urged by members of the House—especially country members—to ask the Government if they would so amend section 2 of "The Police Offences Act, 1890," as to give effect to the prayer of the petition which he presented to the House that day. The petitioners asked that the law should be amended so as to allow of traction-engines working in Canterbury without four men accompanying them—so that two men should be sufficient. The Minister of Education and the Minister of Lands were conversant with this matter.

Mr. SEDDON said the matter mentioned by the honourable gentleman was an important one, but, like all other questions, it had two sides to it. In some districts and on some roads it was very necessary that those in charge of traction-engines should have responsibility; in other places, two men might take charge of an engine with perfect safety. He thought it was more for the local authorities and their by-laws to adjust matters of this kind. He gave a reply to the honourable member for Waitaki on this subject some time ago. Of course it should also be born in mind that these engines were running in opposition to our railways. They were cutting up the roads, and by so doing cast a burden on the ratepayers. He admitted it was necessary that they should go from one place to another so as to do threshing as well as the carrying of grain. This was a matter more for local adjustment than for the General Assembly. However, the matter would be further considered later on.

Mr. McLACHLAN said there were over two hundred traction-engines in Canterbury, not employed in haulage, or very little, but which were engaged driving threshing-machines, chaffcutters, and every conceivable agricultural implement. What was complained of was that the Police Offences Act came between

the owners of these engines and the county authorities.

Mr. SEDDON said he had stated previously that this matter would receive the careful attention of the Government. If it was found that the law in question required adjustment, that could probably be done in some of the Bills now before the House. For instance, they had what was known as the Counties Vehicle-licensing Bill. The matter might be adjusted in that Bill. However, in his opinion this was a matter which ought to be dealt with locally.

SHIPPING AND SEAMEN'S BILL.

3.30. On the question, That this Bill be read a third time,

Mr. W. HUTCHISON said,—I have not had any opportunity of speaking on this Bill, and, as the Bill is approved of by my honourable friend the member for Chalmers, I presume it is a great improvement on the legislation that has preceded it. I still think, however,—and I must record my opinion,—that it does not at all go the length that is required on behalf of the seamen of this colony. I do not know any class of men who are so tyrannized over and ill-used as seamen; and when I come to this Bill I find that it does not do much for them. Turning to clause 15 and the 4th and 5th subsections of that clause, we find how it deals with seamen in port. I should like to lay it down as a principle, Sir, that there should be no distinction between a sailor in port, when the ship is safely moored at the wharf, and any other working-man; and yet under this Bill he is treated in a most exceptional manner. It states that, when a ship is secured safely in harbour, the penalties shall not exceed a fine of £5 or imprisonment for seven days, with or without hard labour. No other working-man could receive any penalty like that at all, and it is entirely contrary to the spirit of the laws we are seeking to make, that all persons should be equal in the sight of the law, that men should be treated in this way. On reference to subsection (5), I do not think honourable members will be able to understand it at all. It lays down that when on the high seas certain penalties shall follow, and certain expenses shall be allowed for the substitute of, a sailor disobeying orders. How a captain is to find a substitute for a sailor on the high seas seems to me to be rather a problem. But the point I wish to emphasize with reference to sailors when they are on land is this: that they are like other working-men and should be treated in precisely the same way. I am not saying anything now about the treatment which sailors receive at sea, because I presume the captain will continue to exercise his autocracy to the fullest extent, although I believe that power is often strained to a very great extent. There is another matter about which I had no opportunity of doing what I should have liked. I refer to the overworking of the officers and men on our coastal steamers. Take the wharf at Wellington, with which honourable members are acquainted. The officers and men often work

there during the whole day until they are thoroughly wearied and worn out; immediately thereafter the steamer goes to sea, and the men are not able to attend to the work required of them, after the hard day's work they have performed. I may mention, in proof of that, it is not very long ago that an accident happened to the steamer "Wallace" in the French Pass which was directly attributable to this very fact of over-working the sailors before they went to sea; and the thing occurs continually, and requires a remedy. I think there might be an instruction under the Second Schedule as to that matter. In connection with the labour question, there is also the question of the employment of Asiatic and Chinese sailors; and, although only remotely affecting us, I think it is our duty in this colony to show to the world that we disapprove of these men being employed instead of European sailors. There is a very great danger incurred by the employment of these Asiatics and Chinese, because, while they do well enough in warm climates, whenever the ships they are on approach the shores of colder countries they are unable to perform the work required of them. Then, there is another question which ought to be dealt with—namely, the sending of old and ill-found ships to sea. Many instances have occurred of whole crews being done to death by their being sent to sea in old ships that are exceedingly well insured. I think that subject would have been worthy the attention of my honourable friend Mr. Millar. I am only desirous of indicating the opinions that I hold on these questions, and I think there is room for very large improvement in reference to the treatment of seamen here and elsewhere. In my opinion they require a great deal more protection than this Bill gives them.

Mr. REEVES.—I think it is almost a pity my honourable friend did not give us the benefit of these objections at an earlier stage. I should have been very glad to have considered them: not, I am bound to say, that there is much of what he told us that is practicable. With regard to the restricting of Asiatics, that can be more properly dealt with in another Bill which I trust will be shortly put before the House, in which the honourable gentleman will see endeavours are being made as far as possible to limit the introduction of Asiatic seamen. At present I am not at all aware that it is a crying evil, or that we have received many objections from the maritime unions in regard to it. This Bill deals with points which the maritime bodies feel it should deal with, and I think it deals with the more pressing and urgent of their demands. I have not endeavoured to go beyond what they ask, or to go beyond what I think Parliament is likely to pass. I do not say this is a perfect Bill, but it is an immense improvement on any legislation that has heretofore existed in this colony. If it comes into law in its present shape, it will be an immense improvement, not only on our old laws, but on those of any portion of the British Empire, including the Mother-country. Therefore I think it might have been received

in a more cordial tone by the honourable gentleman, as the friend of the working-man, than the tone in which he has received it. He says that a seaman on board a vessel is exactly in the same position as any workman on shore. To that statement I demur entirely, and sailors themselves would not admit that they were in the same position as workmen on shore. It is necessary that strict discipline should be maintained on vessels, and that certain reasonable special penalties should be provided for breaches of discipline while ships are in harbour. What we have done in this Bill is to cut down these penalties, and to make them reasonable. Before they were not. That is the best I have been able to do. With regard to the penalties on the high seas, if the honourable gentleman will compare this Bill with the old law he will see how we have modified these penalties so that they shall no longer be harsh. The honourable gentleman said it was absurd to talk about a captain providing a substitute on the high seas, because the captain could not get a substitute when on the high seas. That might be correct; but the captain might have to go off the high seas and get substitutes, and under those circumstances it is only reasonable that the expense should be paid. Taking the Bill on the whole, I think it is an exceedingly good Bill. In one or two respects it does not go far enough, but it lays down great principles in a way in which they were never laid down before. It says that proper provision shall be made to insure the safety of life and the safety of property at sea. It insists that reasonable sanitary provision shall be made for the comfort and health of the crew—a provision which was never made before. And, above all, it lays down the principle that a modicum of every crew shall consist of skilled seamen, and that it shall no longer be possible for a ship to put to sea with men who could not reef or steer, as has often been the case hitherto. There is that, and there are other principles in this Bill such as will render it no longer possible that a steamer shall be overcrowded with passengers, and not possible to overload vessels. A Bill which lays down all these principles is a Bill which should be received by this House, and by the country, with something like cordiality and warm approval.

Bill read a third time.

SHOPS AND SHOP-ASSISTANTS BILL.

Mr. REEVES.—I have to move, That the amendments made in this Bill be agreed to. There is one amendment which I consider an improper one, and I think it ought not to be in the Bill. But it is there, and it was only put there by the casting-vote of the Chairman of Committees. I am not responsible for that amendment, and take no responsibility for its presence in the Bill. I refer to the amendment which brings hotels under the working of this Act. The proper place for that amendment would have been in the Licensing Act; but so anxious am I not to delay the progress of the measure that I shall not ask the House

to strike it out. I ask the House to agree to all amendments, but I take no responsibility, either now or at any future time, in regard to that amendment.

Mr. HOGG.—I should like to move, That this Bill be recommitted for the purpose of considering the clause of which I gave notice, and which appears on Supplementary Order Paper No. 38, as follows:—

“No hawkers, pedlars, or others shall be allowed to sell or offer for sale or distribute meat or other goods, other than fish or fruit or milk, by means of carts or other vehicles, or from stalls or baskets, during that part of the day on which shops are compelled to close as provided by this Act.”

It was my intention to move the insertion of this new clause at the proper time; but, unfortunately, I happened to be accidentally absent. The latter clauses of the Bill were pushed through very rapidly at half-past seven o'clock in the evening, and when I arrived I found the Bill had proceeded as far as the schedule. I consider this clause is a somewhat important one, and am exceedingly sorry that no member of the House thought proper to move its insertion. The reason I think this is a most important clause is this: that if we are going to close all shops during half a day in every week I think it is desirable that travelling shops should also be closed. It is quite possible to have shops on wheels. A large quantity of merchandise is sold from vehicles, and there are tradesmen, including butchers, who have no shops at all, and who depend on sending their meat round to customers. It would be manifestly unfair to butchers who have shops that they should be obliged to close their shops, and at the same time that hawkers of meat should be permitted to go round with carts. It would be encouraging a system of poaching. It would be very unfair if shopkeepers were obliged to close half a day each week, and that during the time the shops were closed hawkers should have the opportunity and privilege of going round and vending their merchandise. Competition of this character would be manifestly unfair. I am very sorry I have to interfere with the Bill in any way; but, out of a spirit of fair-play towards the shopkeepers of New Zealand, I say that the hawking of meat or merchandise should not be permitted during the hours that shops are compelled to be closed.

Mr. LARNACH.—I second the amendment. If the honourable gentleman considers this a little further he will find it is not necessary, because the local bodies have all the power of controlling this traffic.

Mr. HALL.—The honourable gentleman who has just spoken says the municipal authorities have power vested in themselves to deal with this subject. I do not know where the honourable gentleman can possibly have got that information. I am not aware of the municipal authorities having power to prevent butchers' carts from going about. I believe the Hawkers and Pedlars Bill provides that persons shall be allowed to hawk meat, vegetables, *et cetera*,

Mr. Reeves

without a license. When this Bill was first introduced, I tried to amend it so as to apply to butchers' and other carts travelling round when shops were closed; but the honourable gentleman opposite, Mr. Bell, said we ought to make a special clause dealing with that question. I do not think that the House should try to burke this amendment now. The men knew there would be a feeling in this direction. There is no law to prevent a butcher's cart from going round, and, if you close a person's shop, you should prevent any competition from vehicles during the hours shops are closed. There is another question which honourable gentlemen seem to have forgotten. A man

4.0. who goes round with a cart is a shopman for all practical purposes; and why should he not have a holiday like any other shopman? I hope the Government will consider the question fairly, and that the Bill will be recommitted so as to pass this clause, which I am sure will remove a very great cause of friction in this matter. If you do not deal fairly with this matter there will certainly be friction, and the Act will not be entirely beneficial and satisfactory.

Mr. BUTTON.—I shall support the amendment. My attention has been called to the matter, and I think this Bill is the proper place for such a clause as the honourable gentleman has moved. I disagree with the Minister in charge of the Bill in stating that the provision having reference to publichouses was not properly inserted in this Bill. I think it was. This is a Bill dealing with a half-holiday for shops and the vending of commodities. Liquor is a commodity, and I am sure, if there is any time when hotels ought to be shut up, it is on a public half-holiday. With regard to this amendment, I dare say the Minister will say that the proper place for it is the Hawkers and Pedlars Bill. I do not think so.

Mr. REEVES.—Borough Corporations have power already to deal with this matter, under section 422 of the Municipal Corporations Act. So far as I understand the Act, City Councils have power to control the licensing of these people, and to regulate their conduct. If, therefore, they have not the power to prevent their selling on a half-holiday, when they consider it not proper that selling should go on in the streets when it is stopped in the shops, I can only say I do not understand the Act.

Mr. BUTTON.—It appears to me that it would be better for us to provide specially for this, even if provision is made in the Municipal Corporations Act giving local bodies the power to regulate the matter. We know that very frequently they neglect to do their duty; and while on this Bill we might as well make provision for this case.

Mr. BELL.—I should like to explain. I understood the honourable member for Masterton and the honourable member for Waipawa to accept what I said when the Bill was in its first stage with regard to the definition of "shop," that the words they desired to insert could not properly be inserted in the definition, and would be properly inserted in a separate

clause at the end of the Act. I suggested to the honourable member for Waipawa that he should himself move the insertion of a new clause. I was not responsible in any way. I did not understand the Minister in charge to make any observation on the subject at all, except to support my view that it was not a proper place to insert the provision in an amendment of the definition. With regard to what the Minister of Labour said, I am inclined to differ from him. As far as my recollection goes, local authorities have power to regulate the conduct of hawkers and to issue licenses; but I should think it is extremely doubtful whether that includes the power to limit the time during which a license may be exercised. It is certainly not put in express words, and, if the Minister desires to have this provision that has been moved by the honourable member for Masterton included in some Act, this is as good an Act to insert it in as any other.

Mr. REEVES.—In order not to delay the Bill, I will take the advice of the Law Officers of the Crown as to whether this section of the Municipal Corporations Act would control the selling of goods on a half-holiday by hawkers. It is obvious that, if it does, we need not in the least degree fear that local bodies will not enforce it. The bodies representing the stationary population and shopkeepers in towns are not going to let the shopkeepers have their trade filched away by wandering hawkers. I will take the opinion of the Law Officers, and, if they think the section does not apply, the Government will have the amendment moved in another place, and there is not the slightest doubt that it will be accepted.

Mr. T. MACKENZIE.—That is not the true position at all. The Law Officers of the Crown may state that they believe the section gives the local body these powers; but that does not settle the question at all. If a case arose under this, and was brought before the Stipendiary Magistrate, he might not be guided by the Law Officers of the Crown—he might state that this clause does not give the local body this authority. I do not believe it does, myself. I have been on local bodies, and know their powers with regard to hawkers only extend to the proper observance of conditions under which they are to carry on their business; they cannot control the hours in which hawkers can sell their stuff. It is a point that should not be left open, even if the Law Officers hold the same opinion as the Minister. Therefore I hope the honourable member for Masterton will endeavour to have this clause inserted, so as to have it now made clear what the intention of the Act is.

Mr. HALL.—I should like to explain that Municipal Corporations have no control over carts or vehicles trading outside their boundaries, and therefore I do not see how they can control as indicated by the Minister.

The House divided on the question, "That the words proposed to be omitted stand part of the question."

AYES, 43.

Buddo	Kelly, J. W.	Parata
Cadman	Lang	Pinkerton
Carnecross	Larnach	Pirani
Carroll	Lawry	Reeves
Collins	Mackintosh	Saunders
Crowther	McGowan	Seddon
Duncan	McKenzie, J.	Smith, G. J.
Earnshaw	McKenzie, R.	Stevens
Flatman	McLachlan	Steward
Graham	McNab	Tanner
Green	Meredith	Ward.
Hall-Jones	Millar	
Houston	Mills	<i>Tellers.</i>
Hutchison, W.	Morrison	Harris
Joyce	O'Regan	Montgomery.

NOES, 15.

Buick	Kelly, W.	Willis
Button	Masey	Wilson.
Carnell	Newman	<i>Tellers.</i>
Hall	Russell, W. R.	Allen
Heke	Thompson	Mackenzie, T.
Hogg		

PAIR.

<i>For.</i>	<i>Against.</i>
Smith, E. M.	Buchanan.

Majority for, 28.

Words retained.

On the question, That the amendments be agreed to,

Captain RUSSELL said, — I do not agree with the Minister when he said just now that he took no responsibility for the insertion of the provision closing the bars of hotels. I voted for the amendment closing the bars of hotels. I did so upon one principle, which, unfortunately, has not been given effect to in this Bill—namely, that all employes ought to be able to have their half-holiday on one day of the week.

Mr. REEVES.—There is another clause to that effect.

Captain RUSSELL.—No; because the Bill, in the 3rd clause, allows various premises to be kept open on half-holidays; and so we have departed from the true principle of the Bill. It seems to me that there was a departure from the true principle when we made any exemptions. I think that is a blemish in the Bill, because there is no possible reason why people employed in shops of one character should be debarred the holiday which is extended to people who carry on other business. But the main failure in the Bill is in not making one day in the week a compulsory half-holiday. I know that some honourable members think that that would mean very great friction, but I do not think such would be the case. Take, for instance, hawkers and pedlars. Supposing the various boroughs around Dunedin fixed upon different days for the half-holiday.

Mr. REEVES.—Caucus of delegates.

Captain RUSSELL.—Yes; but they may be unable to agree. They may find themselves in this position: A hawker might be able to sell at Roslyn when the shops were closed at Caver-

sham, and when the shops were closed at Caversham he might be able to sell in Dunedin. Under the new paragraph, in clause 8—which seems also to be a departure from the principle of the Bill, so far as I can understand it, for it is the most oddly-involved piece of drafting almost that I have ever read—it seems to me almost any day may be kept a half-holiday, for anything the Bill says to the contrary. It is a most extraordinarily worded paragraph.

Mr. REEVES.—I am going to take steps to have the word "public" inserted in another place.

Captain RUSSELL.—The true principle of the Bill, I am quite convinced, is the fixing of a compulsory Saturday half-holiday. There would be annoyance, I have no doubt, for a period of perhaps six months, but at the end of those six months I am sure every person engaged in retail trade would bless this House for having insisted that there should be one holiday. What has been pointed out in Committee I now point out again: The factories are closed on Saturdays, the banks and other establishments are closed on Saturdays, and the whole of the children have their holiday on Saturday, and it would be a great benefit to those employed in the retail trade if they had the same half-holiday. Though, no doubt, there might be annoyance for a short time, that would vanish, I believe, in the course of six months. The closing of the shops, and not compelling them to observe the statutory half-holiday on the same day, is one of the blemishes of the Bill, because great friction will result, and it will inevitably be the means of bringing this Bill before this House again in twelve or twenty-four months.

Mr. SAUNDERS.—I should like, before this Bill passes from us, to say a few words with regard to the important amendment which was made in Committee, and which was so much objected to by the Minister of Labour—I allude, of course, to the closing of public-house bars during the general holiday. In Norway and Sweden, where the traffic in liquor is regulated not by the temperance party, but by a party appointed by the State to regulate the sale of intoxicating liquors, with a view to promote temperance the Commissioners have taken special care that upon every occasion on which a general holiday occurs, or when there is a holiday of any kind, the public-houses shall be closed; and they carry this so far that they even close the bars of public-houses in the cities during the dinner-hour, when the labourers are out of employment and are liable to stray into those houses. And yet we have the Minister of Education and of Labour opposed bitterly to an arrangement provided and so evidently calculated to protect the morals of the labourers and of our children. I think that is a subject very much to be regretted; and I do hope this amendment, whatever else may be done, will be adhered to, both in this House and in another place. I may say, in regard to myself, the position I have taken up all along in this Bill upon the holiday question is that it will be

mischievous and evil if you are going to keep these bars open just while you have the young people of this country unemployed in any other direction.

Mr. THOMPSON.—I think this Bill would have been a great mistake indeed had the amendment which has just been referred to not been put in the Bill—I mean the amendment compelling public-house bars to close on the holiday. There is no doubt whatever that if you have a general half-holiday and you allow the public-house bars to be kept open, to a large extent you will encourage a great many people to drink more on that day than they would on any other day in the week. I trust that no attempt will be made by the Minister to have that amendment taken out in another place. I think it is to be regretted that the Minister of Labour, who professes to have so keen an interest in the welfare of our working-classes, should be so anxious to keep open the bars of public-houses on public holidays, and by that means prevent the workers in hotel bars from having the same privileges as we propose to give to others.

Mr. COLLINS.—I am very sorry to have to dissent from the views which have been expressed by the last two speakers. I feel that in this matter those of our friends who claim to be supporters of the temperance movement, and who are insisting upon drastic regulations of this kind, are injuring the very cause they desire to assist. It appears to me that the holders of licenses will be very unjustly treated by the clause referred to. Those licenses have been paid for, and under this clause the licensees will be called upon, so far as their bars are concerned, to lose twenty-six days during the year. This seems altogether unjust and unfair, and I think a corresponding reduction should be made in the licenses if the bars are to be closed for those twenty-six days. It appears to me to be wrong to suppose that there would be any increase of drinking because it happens to be a holiday. I am under the impression that if honourable gentlemen who are opposed to this idea will only give this matter serious consideration they will see at once that the fact of the bars being open will not lead to any serious amount of intemperance. Our people are not a drinking people, and they are becoming more and more temperate. As a matter of fact, upon holidays there is very little intemperance; and, that being so, drastic regulations of this kind appear to me to be uncalled-for.

Mr. PIRANI.—I am exceedingly surprised at the illogical speech we have just listened to. The object of the Shops and Shop-assistants Bill as introduced has been to get a half-holiday for everybody whom we could possibly reach—that is, that all shops which it is not urgent should be kept open should be closed; and I say that nobody could fairly urge that there is any great necessity for hotel bars being kept open on the half-holiday. If that is conceded, then it is logical to suppose that those bars must be closed not for the purpose of preventing the sale of liquor, but to insure that

justice shall be done to those who are working in those bars, and that they should be allowed a half-holiday during the week. We know the old Act has been evaded, because there is no power to compel half-holidays to be given; and it has been urged on behalf of this Bill, and urged on behalf of the closing of hotel bars, that the closing of bars and shops will insure the assistants getting the half-holiday which they deserve.

4.30. Mr. WILLIS.—With regard to the remark of the honourable member for Marsden,—that the effect of the hotels being open on the half-holiday will be that there will be a greater amount of drinking,—I am glad to say I can speak for my own district and say that there the hotelkeepers unanimously tell me that, since we have had the half-holiday, practically they have done very little in their business on those days. People generally who have these half-holidays, so far from resorting to hotels for ordinary drinking purposes, as a matter of fact go away into the country, and, consequently, the argument that the people will resort to drink falls to the ground. I think also the point raised by the honourable member for Christchurch City (Mr. Collins) a right and proper one: that, as hotels pay a heavy license-fee, to take away from them not only the afternoon, but the evening too—because if the hotel is closed under this Bill in the afternoon it must be closed in the evening as well—would be very unjust indeed if they had to continue to pay the same license, and were compelled to close during the afternoon and evening of one day each week. Then, there are those who resort to hotels as a matter of convenience, and it would be very awkward for them to find the hotels shut altogether.

Mr. G. J. SMITH.—I rise to speak to the clause under discussion. I hope that it will not be struck out in another place, and that the Minister in charge of the Bill will not take any steps to bring that result about. I differ entirely from my colleague the honourable member for Christchurch City on this matter. We have heard before the argument that those endeavouring to promote the cause of temperance are doing great injury to their cause. We have heard that very often indeed; but I do not think that, so far, we have done very much to injure it. On the contrary, I think that the general expression of opinion throughout New Zealand at the last licensing election tends to prove that the agitation which has been going on has had a good effect, and will result in the increased sobriety of the people. It may be that in the country districts there is not so much drinking on a holiday; but I say—and I think it can be proved—that in the cities or large centres it is an undoubted fact that when there is a holiday there is a certain amount of extra drinking going on. I do not say there is any large increase of drunkenness, but there is a considerable increase in the amount of drinking, and to assert the contrary is incorrect. But the principle of the Bill is not to deal with licensing matters, but to provide that all em-

ployés shall have a half-holiday, and, that being so, I contend—and I think the Minister in charge of the Bill will agree with me—that the employés in a bar are as much entitled to a half-holiday as the employés in any other retail shop. That being so, I hope the clause will be maintained, and that the Minister himself will cause no alteration to be made in the Bill.

Mr. BUDDO.—I think the last two speakers have adduced two very good reasons why the Minister in charge of the Bill should stick to his Bill. The honourable member for Wanganui says that the effect of the half-holiday is really a reduction in the amount of drinking at hotel bars, and the honourable member for Christchurch City says the result is an increase. Well, I say those are two reasons why we should say that the hotel-keepers' employés should get a half-holiday; and I trust the Minister in charge of the Bill will take good care that no serious amendments are added to the Bill, especially as regards the hotel bars being closed on the weekly half-holiday.

Amendments agreed to.

On the question, That the Bill be read a third time,

Mr. EARNSHAW said,—I am not going to delay the passing of the Bill, but just to speak of one thing which I think has been very improperly done to those who get Saturday half-holidays. I think it is a mistake, and that it is greatly to be regretted that, at any rate, labour members of the House should have seen fit to vote against those houses which now, at great sacrifice to themselves, are keeping the Saturday half-holiday, so that they shall be forced to take a half-holiday in the middle of the week if it is determined that that shall be the half-holiday. It will mean that a number of those wholesale houses which are running retail businesses will be forced to surrender their present Saturday half-holiday and fall into line with the weekly half-holiday. I think that is not what the shop-assistants' societies have sent men to this House, or have given them their support, to do. The intention of the movement in this direction for the Saturday half-holiday was certainly not to take away from those persons who were cheerfully giving their employés the half-holiday the power to do so, and to compel them to resort to another weekly half-holiday.

Mr. REEVES.—I may say I have not been treated in a reasonable way. I rose this afternoon to say that I would not press to strike out this clause dealing with the publichouses, although I did not think it ought to have been forced into the Bill. I do not think that any opponent of the clause could have taken up a more reasonable attitude, and yet without the slightest provocation the honourable member for Selwyn gets up and makes a bitter personal attack upon myself on that ground. What is the use of being reasonable to some people if that is the way one is to be treated? Some honourable members have said that that clause should have been placed in the Bill because it is only right that employés in public-

houses should have a half-holiday. That is exactly what I thought, and special provision was made in the Bill to insure a half-holiday for them, and honourable gentlemen have been supporting Mr. Hutchison's amendment without having taken the trouble to inform themselves of the provisions of the Bill. They have never even taken the trouble to strike my clause out, but have left it in in flat contradiction to the clause they have put in themselves. Of course that will lead to no practical inconvenience, but as a matter of draftsmanship there is a flat contradiction there, and the leaving it in shows that they have never read the Bill. I did not resist the amendment on the ground of principle—the principle of whether the publichouse should or should not be shut. I resisted it on the ground that this is not the proper Bill for it. There is a special law in the land dealing with the hours for the opening and closing of hotels, and I think it is unscientific and absurd, while you have that Act, which says that publichouses shall be opened and shut at certain hours and on certain days, in another Act to make provision that on a certain day they shall be shut also. And here you have the Licensing Bill coming down, in which you may insert the provision, and yet you insist upon burdening my Bill with it. What can be more absurd than that this clause should be put in, thereby giving the Bill another chance of being thrown out once more in another place, as it has been thrown out three times already? I think I should have been perfectly right, as a matter of order and of scientific arrangement, to resist it with all my power, since the clause has a chance of making it unpopular elsewhere; yet I did nothing to-day to lay myself open to the attack of the honourable member for Selwyn, but, on the contrary, I met him and the clause in a much more reasonable way, I venture to say, than he would have met a clause which I had put in and to which he had any objection. As regards the principle of the clause I may say a word or two, as it has been discussed by other honourable members. To say that unless you shut up the publichouses on the shop-assistants' half-holiday it will lead to general drinking is, I think, absurd. Do all the merchants' clerks, all the professional men, all the factory-hands go into the publichouses and spend their Saturdays drinking now? And in the country boroughs and places where they have the shop half-holiday observed already on Wednesday or Thursday, does that take place? Do you mean to say that you have the right so to slander the men and women who are employed in the shops as to say that they will spend their afternoons drinking in the hotels? It is a monstrous slander, and a most unfair and unrighteous charge to be made by a member in this House, and yet the honourable member for Marsden did not hesitate to make it. He could not have thought what it meant or he would not have said what he did. I believe there is no necessity for that special provision bearing upon the publichouses. A licensed house is not a shop, but something quite different, and

Mr. G. J. Smith

should not be dealt with in any Shop-hours Bill, but in the Act that specially deals with it. That was my reason for objecting to this special provision, and it would be my reason for objecting now. I could not say less than I did—namely, that I took no responsibility for the clause, though I would not arrest the Bill at this stage; but I was within my right in saying that I took no responsibility for the clause forced into my Bill against my will, and that therefore it must be dealt with in another place just as the members there think fit.

Mr. SAUNDERS.—I wish, with regard to the remark as to the personal attack, to make a personal explanation. I made no attack upon any one. I think most honourable members will admit that I am not in the habit of making bitter personal attacks. Whether the honourable member cares very much is not for me to say, but I will say this: There is no man in this House who so often interposes—

Mr. SPEAKER.—The honourable gentleman is going beyond a personal explanation. I must request the honourable member to resume his seat while I state that I am willing to hear an explanation of what was said by the honourable gentleman himself, but the honourable gentleman is not at liberty to attack what has been said by other honourable members.

Bill read a third time.

SUPPLY.

IN COMMITTEE.

CLASS II.—COLONIAL SECRETARY'S DEPARTMENT.

Vote, Clerk of Executive Council, £50, agreed to.

Vote, Colonial Secretary's Office, £1,720, agreed to.

Ministers' Secretaries, £775.

Mr. ALLEN said the House was in considerable darkness as to the number of Secretaries and shorthand-writers employed by members of the Government, and he should like to be supplied with some information on the point.

Mr. WARD said there were seven Private Secretaries, who all wrote shorthand except two.

Mr. SEDDON said the extra shorthand- and type-writer, Mr. Gray, at £150, was employed by him. Mr. Hamer, in addition to being a Private Secretary, was also Secretary to the Board of Examiners under the Coal-mines Act, and therefore he (Mr. Seddon) could not have the whole of this gentleman's time at his disposal. Mr. Hamer was a most reliable and valuable officer, and all his duties were very faithfully performed.

Captain RUSSELL would like to have some explanation as to the duties performed by the gentleman who was Secretary for Industries and Commerce besides those appertaining to that office.

Mr. WARD said the gentleman referred to assisted the Government in various ways during the session, and discharged all his duties in a highly satisfactory manner. At the same time, his duties as Secretary of Industries and Commerce were in no way neglected.

Mr. SAUNDERS had no sympathy with complaints that were made with regard to the employment of Private Secretaries. He thought there had been no money better spent; and he could say this: that there was no Premier he had ever known in New Zealand, or public officer, who gave such full replies to any applications that were made to him as the present Premier.

Mr. ALLEN said there was an increase of £25 in the amount for Private Secretaries this year.

Mr. WARD said the additional £25 was for the shorthand- and type-writer employed by the Premier. The Private Secretaries had to work very hard, during long hours, and he did not think the Committee would begrudge them this extra £25 each.

Vote, £775, agreed to.

Messengers and office-keepers, £4,041.

Dr. NEWMAN asked if the Government intended to fill up the vacancy caused by Mr. Revell's retirement from the position of Chief Messenger.

Mr. WARD said the office was at present filled by one of the ordinary messengers; but the Government intended to appoint a Chief Messenger in Mr. Revell's place.

Mr. BUDDO took exception to the item for custodian and housekeeper at Government House, Auckland. What was this Government House for? Had it anything to do with the Civil Service?

Mr. WARD replied that it was for the use of His Excellency whenever he desired to stay in Auckland. It had nothing to do with the Civil Service.

Vote, £4,041, agreed to.

Electoral Department, £3,020.

Captain RUSSELL, referring to the case of Hawke's Bay, pointed out the inexpediency of employing constables as Registrars of Electors. It was improper that the officers employed in the carrying-out of the duties of that office should in any way be under the control of Ministers. The fact, however, that the constables in Hawke's Bay gave satisfaction to all the candidates showed that they must have acted impartially; but that did not remove the objection to the practice of employing police-constables in work of this kind.

Mr. CARNELL said the constables in Hawke's Bay had carried out their duties to the satisfaction of every one concerned.

Mr. WARD said that in some cases Chief Postmasters were employed, Postmasters, Registrars of Deeds, and Clerks of various Courts, the selection being made so as not to put too much work on particular officers. The distribution of the work was so arranged that it was performed by those officers who had most time to do it. With regard to police-constables doing the work, he might inform the honourable gentleman that such a course would not be resorted to in future.

Mr. ALLEN would like to ask what the Government intended to do with regard to the expenses incurred by districts under the Licensing Act. This imposed a serious burden upon

the local bodies, more particularly in the Clutha District, where difficulties had arisen with regard to the expenses of taking the poll.

Mr. WARD said the Government had received a number of communications from various local bodies, but they had not yet learned from the whole of them the actual expenses incurred. Those who had applied were informed that as soon as the Government had received accounts of the whole of the expenditure they would consider whether they would rebate the whole or any portion of the expense. If the Government decided favourably in the matter the sum would appear on the supplementary estimates.

Dr. NEWMAN asked how much the Treasurer thought it would come to.

Mr. WARD said £3,000 or £4,000.

Vote, £3,020, agreed to.

Vote, Audit Office, £5,842, agreed to.

Registrar-General's Department, £6,250.

Dr. NEWMAN drew attention to the inconsistency between the salary of the Registrar of Births, Deaths, and Marriages at Wellington, £175, and the salaries of the Registrars in the other chief towns: £200 was set down for Auckland, £225 for Christchurch, and £200 for Dunedin. The officer in question had been in the service for a very long time, and, he thought, was entitled to a higher salary.

Mr. WARD promised to bring the matter under the notice of the Colonial Secretary, as it was entirely within that gentleman's province.

Mr. PIRANI asked for an explanation of the increase of salary for the Chief Clerk from £250 to £275.

Mr. WARD might say, in connection with the increases on the estimates generally, that every one was most carefully scrutinised, and in no case was an increase allowed until the Government had been afforded the strongest evidence as to the officer being fairly entitled to it. This officer filled an important post, and had a great deal of work.

Vote, £6,250, agreed to.

Agent-General's Department, £4,350.

Mr. BELL asked for an explanation of the item, "Contribution from Public Trust and Government Insurance Funds, £150," and would also like to know whether the Government, in considering the increase in Ministers' salaries, would also consider the advisability of increasing that of the Agent-General, which had been reduced when the first reduction in Ministers' salaries was carried. A married man holding that position could not live on the salary.

Mr. WARD, in reply to the first question, said that the Agent-General's office acted in London as agent for the Public Trust Office and the Government Insurance in connection with various official matters, and those departments consequently contributed towards its expense. As regarded the increase of salary suggested by the honourable gentleman, he could not give a definite answer at once, but the matter would be considered.

Mr. Allen

Mr. T. MACKENZIE thought the Agent-General's salary was quite high enough, and that the time was not at all opportune to increase it.

Captain RUSSELL indorsed the remarks of the honourable member for Wellington City with regard to the Agent-General's salary.

Mr. EARNSHAW thought the Agent-General should be paid for work done, and not for entertaining, *et cetera*, which should be done out of his own pocket.

Dr. NEWMAN would like to ask the Colonial Treasurer if it was proposed to make a contribution to the Imperial Institute.

Mr. WARD said it was not intended to do so.

Vote, £4,350, agreed to.

Printing and stationery, £25,438.

Mr. HOGG asked how it was that the expenditure on salaries had been increased this year to the extent of over £1,000.

Mr. CADMAN said the increases were not anything like £1,000; but there were several increases. The explanation was this: When he took over this department eighteen months ago there was a great deal of grumbling in respect to increases of salaries, and a scale was arranged something like that in force in the Postal Department. The late Government Printer received £500, while the present Government Printer started last year at a minimum of £400, and it would take him five years to reach the maximum, the annual increase being £20; and so it was in proportion in the case of the other salaries.

Mr. G. HUTCHISON asked if this vote included any addition to the Government Printing Office building this year. It was quite obvious that some addition was necessary.

Mr. CADMAN said the question was under consideration now, and if anything was decided on it would have to appear on the public-works estimates.

Mr. J. W. KELLY said protests had been received from master printers in all parts of the colony in regard to the amount of printing done in Wellington, some of which ought to be done in other parts.

Dr. NEWMAN said the essence of the New Liberalism was that everything was to be done by the State. They had now one of the finest establishments, and the honourable member wanted to break it up.

Mr. J. W. KELLY said he did not want to break it up. It was absolutely necessary that a certain amount of work should be done in Wellington, but there was work done there which ought not to be.

Mr. PIRANI said, in reference to the increase in salaries, he thought the Minister in charge deserved credit for remedying the injustice which had been perpetuated in the Government Printing Office ever since it had existed. In no department of the Service—not excepting the postal service—had there been so much injustice as in this. He knew capable men, who could command a good salary in any printing-office, who had worked at the Government Printing Office for twenty or twenty-five years at £3 a week, without

being granted an increase. He was glad to see that the Minister was strong enough and had good sense enough to grade some of these salaries, so that men might get increases and receive some recognition for long service.

Mr. HOGG thought the establishment was far too large. On the one hand the salaries were increased, while the amount of material had largely decreased. A large amount of the material turned out of this establishment was simply waste paper. A most scandalous waste was going on. The sum of £25,000 was too large to expend in this way.

Mr. CADMAN said he came to Wellington, like other honourable members, with a very strong feeling against centralisation. Since he had had charge of the department he had spent much time going over the details, and he must say that he had come to the conclusion that he could make very little change. In regard to the decrease in the vote for stationery and so on, it was a great deal to the credit of the present Government Printer that he had decreased the vote. He could assure honourable members that the gentleman who now occupied the position of Government Printer had saved far more than his salary in attending to details and in getting better bargains when purchasing. That accounted very much for the lessened vote.

Mr. TANNER desired to draw attention to the question of extending the building.

Mr. SEDDON said that was under consideration now.

Mr. TANNER said it had been under consideration for four years, to his knowledge.

Mr. SEDDON said the plans were almost ready.

Mr. TANNER believed the plans for the Dunedin Gaol had been ready for fifteen or twenty years past. He desired to know if the building was to be extended.

Mr. SEDDON said that was all right.

Mr. W. HUTCHISON was satisfied there had been very great improvement under the care and management of the present Minister.

Vote, £25,488, agreed to.

Miscellaneous services, £16,096.

Mr. ALLEN would like to have an explanation of the item, "General contingencies, £7,000."

Mr. WARD said a return had been laid on the table giving the whole of the details.

Mr. ALLEN said that was for the last year.

Mr. WARD said that of course he could not give the particulars for the coming year on a vote for "Contingencies." They must judge from what had been done last year. Something must be left to a large department like this. He might say that they should not fail to administer it with due care.

Mr. ALLEN said that not many years ago a very strong protest had been made against these "contingency" votes. He did not see the necessity for this large "contingency" vote; and, as an intimation that they ought to have a plain indication of what the money was wanted for, he would move, That the item be reduced by £500.

The Committee divided.

AYES, 17.

Bell	Hutchison, G.	Tanner
Buick	Lang	Te Ao
Carnoross	Mackenzie, T.	Wilson.
Collins	Mitchelson	<i>Tellers.</i>
Earnshaw	Newman	Allen
Green	Smith, G. J.	Massey.

NOES, 30.

Buddo	Lawry	Pinkerton
Cadman	McKenzie, J.	Pirani
Carroll	McKenzie, R.	Reeves
Crowther	McNab	Saunders
Duncan	Meredith	Steward
Graham	Mills	Thompson
Hall	Montgomery	Ward.
Harris	Morrison	<i>Tellers.</i>
Houston	O'Regan	Carnell
Hutchison, W.	Parata	McLachlan.
Kelly, W.		

PAIRS.

<i>For.</i>	<i>Against.</i>
Maslin	Fraser
Russell, W. R.	Larnach
Smith, E. M.	Buchanan.

Majority against, 13.

Amendment negatived.

Dr. NEWMAN said that, as to the item, "Expenses of delegate to Canadian Conference, £1,100," he would like to know whether Mr. Lee-Smith had a salary, if it was included in this, and what qualification beyond that of "colour" he possessed for the appointment, since that seemed to be the great quality.

Mr. WARD might say that Mr. Lee-Smith was a very able man, and, judging from the speeches he had made at the Conference, he had done the colony a great deal of credit. His speeches were excellent, and showed clearly his fitness, quite independent of "colour." He did not know what "colour" Mr. Smith was, but he was certainly a very able man, and represented the colony excellently. He was pleased to be able to inform the honourable gentleman that the £1,100 included all expenses and allowances to Mr. Smith, travelling-expenses as well.

Dr. NEWMAN asked how much salary he got.

Mr. WARD said that, if his memory served him, there was a lump sum fixed to cover the whole trip. The amount was not to exceed £1,100; and, in addition to representing the colony at the Canadian Conference, Mr. Lee-Smith had been requested to make inquiries in England with a view to the development of various products which the colony was in the habit of exporting. Their desire was to extend the trade as much as possible.

Dr. NEWMAN wished to know how long this £1,100 was to last.

Mr. WARD said it was to last the whole time.

Mr. WILSON said the Premier had told them that one of Mr. Lee-Smith's qualifications was that he was an expert in flax, and would make inquiry into the prospects of that industry. He would like to know if any communication had been received respecting it.

Mr. WARD was not aware of any; but any valuable information Mr. Lee-Smith furnished would be published for the benefit of the colony in due course.

Mr. T. MACKENZIE thought the Government had done a very advisable thing in appointing Mr. Lee-Smith.

Mr. THOMPSON said he understood some changes were to be made with regard to the British Resident at Rarotonga. If so, was it intended to continue this vote of £500?

Mr. WARD said that, whatever changes were made, the Government would continue to ask for the vote of £500; but, if the colony could be relieved of that item by any change that might be made, the Government would be very happy to discontinue the vote.

Mr. MITCHELSON said the natives at Rarotonga had built a very nice house for the Resident, and when they undertook the erection of the house it was understood that Mr. Moss and his family were going to reside there. If Mr. Moss was continued as Resident at Rarotonga, he ought to take his family to occupy the residence.

Mr. WARD said that the matter of Mr. Moss's family going to Rarotonga was one for Mr. Moss and not the Government to consider, so long as he did the duties that he was expected to discharge for the colony. It was no part of the Government's business to say to Mr. Moss that he should take his family to Rarotonga.

Mr. W. HUTCHISON, while agreeing with the appointment of Mr. Lee-Smith, thought £1,100 too much. The one-half of that amount would be more than enough for any value they were likely to receive. He objected also to the £500 on the estimates for the New Zealand Institute. Half of the papers the Transactions contained were not worth being printed.

Mr. T. MACKENZIE said the Transactions were of great value to the country, and would be of great scientific value in years to come, more especially with regard to the flora and fauna, and to the habits and customs of the Native race. The papers had been taken notice of all over the scientific world. The time was quickly passing, and if assistance and encouragement were not now given the golden opportunity would be lost for ever. Regarding the remarks of Mr. Hutchison, they were quite unworthy of that gentleman.

Mr. W. HUTCHISON did not deny there were some valuable papers in the volume, but a more judicious selection ought to be made of those which it was decided to print.

Dr. NEWMAN thought the payment of £100 in aid of the Royal Humane Society of Australasia should be discontinued, and voted to those societies in New Zealand.

Mr. WARD explained that these matters were governed from Australia. He should be very happy to assist in the establishment of a humane society with its head-quarters in New Zealand.

Mr. ALLEN wanted to know if any analysts had been appointed under the Adulteration Prevention Act.

Mr. J. MCKENZIE said that, besides one in Wellington, there were Professor Black in Dunedin, Professor Bickerton in Christchurch, and Mr. J. A. Pond in Auckland; and regulations had been issued.

Mr. TANNER objected to the vote of £500 for the New Zealand Institute, and the proposal of Ministers last year to reduce it by one-half showed that they entertained a similar objection. The colony did not get anything in value for the money spent in this way. He also considered £1,100 too much in connection with Mr. Lee-Smith's visit to Canada.

Mr. T. MACKENZIE moved, That the item, "Bonus to aid flax industry, £2,000," be reduced by £1, in order to enable the Minister to speak again.

Mr. G. HUTCHISON moved, That the item "New Zealand Institute, £500," be reduced by £1, as an indication that the Government should curtail this expenditure.

The Committee divided.

Mr. WARD said he would accept Mr. Hutchison's amendment.

AYES, 37.

Buddo	Kelly, J. W.	Pinkerton
Cadman	Kelly, W.	Pirani
Carnell	Lawry	Saunders
Duncan	Mackintosh	Seddon
Earnshaw	McKenzie, J.	Smith, G. J.
Graham	McKenzie, R.	Stevens
Green	McLachlan	Tanner
Hall	Meredith	Thompson
Harris	Mills	Ward.
Hogg	Montgomery	
Houston	Morrison	
Hutchison, G.	O'Regan	
Hutchison, W.	Pere	

Tellers.

Hall-Jones
Lang.

NOES, 21.

Bell	Joyce	Steward
Buick	Massey	Te Ao
Carncross	McGowan	Willis
Carroll	McNab	Wilson.
Collins	Mitchelson	
Flatman	Parata	
Fraser	Reeves	
Heke		

Tellers.

Allen
Mackenzie, T.

PAIRS.

For.	Against.
Maslin	Duthie
Smith, E. M.	Buchanan.

Majority for, 16.

Amendment agreed to.

Mr. MEREDITH moved, That the item, "House-allowance to Hon. Mr. Carroll, £100," be struck out. This gentleman, who did not hold a portfolio, received a salary of £400 a year. His duty was to advise the Native Minister on matters affecting the Native race; and he understood the honourable gentleman had a Private Secretary to assist him.

Mr. WARD said Mr. Carroll had to come to Wellington during the recess to attend Cabinet meetings; and was it reasonable that he should pay his house-keeping expenses during that time?—for he did not receive the ordinary house-allowance. He had not a

Private Secretary, but he had the services at present of a Native interpreter.

Mr. J. W. KELLY suggested that they should do away with house-allowance altogether. He would be prepared to vote for an increase in the salaries of Ministers, but he thought the grant for house-allowance should be done away with.

Mr. SEDDON said this was really a saving. When Mr. Carroll left his home to come to Wellington, if he was not allowed house-allowance, he would receive £1 10s. a day travelling-allowance. It was unsatisfactory having it in that way, and it was thought it would be much better to put this sum on the estimates.

Dr. NEWMAN wished to know why Mr. Carroll had only £100 allowance, while other Ministers had double that amount.

Mr. WARD said it was because it was considered that was fair payment for the time Mr. Carroll was required to be in Wellington.

Mr. HEKE said he had nothing to say personally against Mr. Carroll, but it seemed to him there was nothing at all in the position he occupied, and that it would be far better that the colony should save the salary. Seeing that the Premier held the portfolio of Native Minister, there was really nothing in Mr. Carroll being a member of the Cabinet.

Mr. STEVENS was quite satisfied that the colony had full value for the money expended in this manner, and thought that no money on the estimates was more judiciously expended than the amounts granted to Mr. Carroll for his services in representing in Cabinet the interests of the Native race.

Mr. J. MCKENZIE could not allow to pass, without contradiction, the remarks made by the honourable member for the Northern Maori District. It was quite a mistake to say there was nothing in Mr. Carroll's position in the Cabinet. As the Minister who had to do with the purchase of Native lands, he could say that Mr. Carroll had earned his salary many times over by his services to the colony.

Mr. CARROLL said that so long as he occupied the position he had accepted he should render what services he could to the colony, and should do his best to advance the interests of every one in the country. If his services were not worth the salary paid to him, the House should say so, for he would not care to receive it if the House considered that his services were not required. He had endeavoured in 1887 to bring about reform by putting the Natives and the Europeans on the same footing, and doing away with special representation, but had been opposed by both Europeans and Maoris. Possibly they were right, and the proposal premature, but he was satisfied that it would come, and that until that was done there would be no proper solution of the question. It was for the House to say if his services were worth what was paid for them. He did not think it would be dignified on his part to accept a position inferior to the one he held; otherwise he was quite indifferent.

Mr. HEKE said he never questioned the ability of Mr. Carroll, but, as the Premier was the Native Minister, he did not think there was any occasion for Mr. Carroll to hold a seat in the Cabinet. He was well aware that the Native race did not benefit by the position Mr. Carroll was occupying in the Cabinet. He thought that, as the Native race did not benefit by the position Mr. Carroll occupied, it would be more to the interests of the Natives and of the colony to do away with that position altogether, and that the salary and expenses might just as well be saved. As to the special Maori representation in the Cabinet, the answer to that was that Mr. Carroll now represented a European constituency.

Mr. ALLEN said there was a great deal of force in the argument of Mr. Heke. He did not see what good could result to the country from the position which Mr. Carroll at present held. It would be quite another thing if the portfolio of Native Affairs were handed over to that gentleman. It had been given as a reason to justify his present position that he was useful in connection with the purchase of Native lands by the Government. But if he was a paid agent he should be outside the House, and outside political influences altogether. An old and practically effete Act had been hunted up to include the Hon. Mr. Carroll as a Minister, so as to get over the difficulty that was placed in the way by the Act that reduced the number of Ministers to six.

Mr. SEDDON very much regretted the turn the debate had taken. It was impossible for the Government to increase the number of Ministers without a special Act of the House; but under the Act of 1873 the Government could, if they pleased, appoint two members of the Executive to represent the Native race. They had appointed only one, and there was no need at all for them to rake up any old Act for that purpose. The two members of the Executive representing the Native race need not be members of the House at all. Mr. Carroll's appointment had assisted to bring about the real good feeling existing between the Natives and the Government, and the system was working well in the interests of both races.

Mr. BELL said Mr. Carroll could not be regarded as representing the Native race. He represented a European constituency in that House. When he represented a Native constituency, then he did represent the Native race.

Mr. STEVENS said it had been asked what service Mr. Carroll was rendering to the colony. Well, supposing a certain number of Natives possessed a certain block: they went to Mr. Carroll, and that gentleman put the case clearly to the Minister of Lands without the intervention of very expensive solicitors. That was how Mr. Carroll saved expense both to Maoris and to Europeans.

Mr. G. HUTCHISON said that under the Act of 1873 two representatives of the Native race could be appointed on the Executive Council with £400 a year each and travelling-expenses except during the session of Parliament. He might also point out that to vote house-

allowance was in contravention of the Act of 1873, because that Act provided that house-allowance should only be payable to each member of the Executive Council who held one of the Ministerial offices mentioned in the schedule of the Act. Mr. Carroll did not—could not—hold one of those offices, and therefore could not legally receive house-allowance.

Mr. SEDDON said the Government would make inquiry into that point.

Amendment negatived.

Mr. ALLEN asked how the New Zealand court in the Imperial Institute was to be kept up.

Mr. WARD said that was a question which he presumed the management of the Imperial Institute would have to solve.

Vote, as reduced, £16,095, agreed to.

CLASS III.—COLONIAL TREASURER.

Treasury Department, £6,730.

Mr. EARNSHAW drew attention to the increase in the item, "Secretary to the Treasury, Receiver- and Paymaster-General, £700." This item had been increased from £650.

Mr. WARD said the head of this department was promised by a former Minister an increase of £100. The officer who filled the position before received £800 a year, and he had not to discharge duties of so intricate and difficult a character as the present holder of the office. This officer had been twenty-three years in the service of the Government. The amount put down was a moderate increase.

Vote, £6,730, agreed to.

Vote, Friendly Societies Registry Office, £1,170, agreed to.

Office of Industries and Commerce, £500.

Mr. G. J. SMITH asked for an explanation of this vote.

Mr. WARD said the clerk who received £325 had been transferred from another department. The item, "Contingencies, £175," was for the purpose of meeting ordinary charges made in connection with this department. For instance, they had paid freight on a quantity of New Zealand's natural products to England, for the purpose of having experiments made in connection with them. That freight would probably be £40 or £50. They had sent Home specimens of ironsand and of New Zealand timber for the purpose referred to. In the opinion of the Government this ought to be one of the most important and useful departments in the service, and he thought it was capable of doing a great deal of good.

Vote, £500, agreed to.

Vote, Land- and Income-tax Department, £8,758, agreed to.

Treasury: Miscellaneous services, £9,564.

Dr. NEWMAN thought this colony should be put on the same footing as Victoria and New South Wales respecting these items and the inscription of stock. He believed that £4,000 or £5,000 a year might be saved in this way, and thought the Agent-General might be communicated with respecting this matter.

Mr. WARD agreed that it was desirable that anything that was possible in this way should

Mr. G. Hutchison

be done, and would point out that the vote being £2,400 less than last year showed that they were anxious to go in this direction.

Mr. BELL thought they should communicate with the Agent-General to know whether there was any benefit obtained from the services of a financial adviser.

Mr. WARD said it did not follow that there would always be a good financial Agent-General representing the colony in London, and the services of a financial adviser might then prove very valuable to the colony. He might say that this officer, Sir Penrose Julian, was a very able man, and he was also an elderly man, and, since he had the interests of the colony very much at heart, it might be well that they should wait until he retired before making a change.

Vote, £9,564, agreed to.

CLASS IV.—JUSTICE DEPARTMENT.

Vote, Department of Justice, £2,075, agreed to. Crown Law Office, £2,205.

Mr. PIRANI asked whether the Government intended to make an appointment of an additional Crown Draftsman, as during the recess one had been advertised for.

Mr. CADMAN said it was the intention to make an appointment later on, as one of the Crown Law Officers was likely to retire at the end of the year.

Item, £2,205, agreed to.

Supreme Court, £6,450.

Mr. MEREDITH wished to know who appointed the clerks to the Judges.

Mr. CADMAN said the Judges made the appointments themselves. The Government had no voice in it.

Item agreed to.

Vote, Bankruptcy, £6,182, agreed to.

District, Magistrates', and Wardens' Courts, £43,131.

Mr. PIRANI would like to know if a Stipendiary Magistrate was to be appointed for Palmerston North.

Mr. CADMAN had already replied that the districts around Wellington were so rapidly increasing in population that an additional Magistrate would be needed, but that it was yet impossible to say in which district he should reside.

Mr. R. McKENZIE wished to know if it was intended to appoint an extra Stipendiary Magistrate or Warden for the West Coast. Three men had now to attend to the work of a district extending over six hundred miles in length.

Mr. CADMAN said the Government had no intention at present of appointing another Magistrate for the West Coast.

Mr. BELL suggested that the Hon. the Minister should induce his colleague who was responsible for such matters to visit and inspect the arrangements connected with the Supreme and Appeal Courts.

Mr. WILLIS desired to draw attention to the altogether insufficient salary paid to Judge Kettle, and contrasted it with the salaries paid for similar services in the other colonies and in England.

Mr. TANNER was surprised to hear them advised to follow the example of colonies which had pursued a policy that had landed them not far short of bankruptcy.

Mr. G. HUTCHISON thought that the salaries of all the District Judges—with the exception of the senior District Judge, who was now receiving about £900—should be increased. The services of such a man as Judge Kettle were worth what they could be retained at, and it was not at all likely they would be retained at the present salary. It had been hinted by the Minister of Justice that District Courts should be abolished. He trusted that this would not be done unless the Government were prepared to increase the number of places at which the Supreme Courts should sit.

Mr. STEVENS desired to hear similar testimony to what had been stated by the honourable members for Wanganui and Waitotara with reference to the eminently satisfactory services rendered by Judge Kettle, who gave entire satisfaction throughout the whole of his extensive district, and was suffering an injustice through being paid too small a salary altogether.

Dr. NEWMAN understood that Judge Kettle was promised by a previous Government that if he was a success his salary would be increased. Now, he understood that Judge Kettle had been a very distinguished success, and he (Dr. Newman) thought, therefore, that his salary ought to be increased.

Mr. SEDDON said that two offers had been made to Judge Kettle, and he had refused them, one as a Judge of the Validation Court, and he believed Judge Kettle would have filled such a position very satisfactorily. Judge Kettle had not been overlooked by the Government, nor would he be overlooked in the event of certain changes taking place.

Mr. CROWTHER said honourable members were advocating an increase in the salaries of highly-paid officers in the public service, but in his opinion they would do better if they made some additions to the salaries of hard-worked and underpaid clerks, to whom a rise of £25 would be of more service than £250 to the Agent-General and others occupying high positions in the public service.

Mr. PIRANI was sorry to hear the Government had been trying to take Judge Kettle away from his present district, but he was glad that the district was not going to lose his services. In addition to his duties as District Judge on the West Coast and in the Wairarapa, this gentleman was also Resident Magistrate at Wanganui; and he (Mr. Pirani) believed no other District Judge acted in a similar capacity.

Mr. GRAHAM said the honourable gentleman was in error. The District Judge at Nelson was also Stipendiary Magistrate, and held seven offices altogether.

Mr. PIRANI said that Judge Kettle did the work of two District Judges, besides being Stipendiary Magistrate.

Mr. HOGG wished to draw the attention of the Minister and the Committee to the very

inadequate salary paid to the clerk and bailiff at Pahiataua—only £60 a year. The salary was far too small for the duties that had to be performed.

Mr. McGUIRE said it was the wish of the whole of the West Coast that Judge Kettle should be retained there. He was very sorry to learn that the Government were making overtures to Judge Kettle with the object of removing him from a district in which he had given nothing but satisfaction. He considered the salary altogether inadequate for the responsible nature of the duties Judge Kettle was called upon to perform. He also considered the District Judges should be made independent of the Government of the day, and placed in a similar position to Judges of the Supreme Court—namely, made absolutely independent as regarded tenure of office and remuneration.

Mr. CADMAN said no doubt Judge Kettle had to travel over a very large area of country, but he had a railway-train nearly everywhere he went. There were fully six or eight Magistrates in the colony who did quite as much work as Judge Kettle. Judge Kettle was a very efficient and painstaking officer. The question of giving him an increase had been considered once or twice, and two offers had been made to him, but he had declined them.

Vote, £43,131, agreed to.

Native Land Court, £15,837.

Mr. G. J. SMITH asked for an explanation of the reason for appointing two extra Judges and an interpreter and a cadet.

Mr. SEDDON said the Government thought it desirable, in order that the work should be facilitated, that two extra Judges should be appointed, and it was decided to consult the House first. It was in the interests of the North Island, and also of the Native race, that these appointments should be made.

Vote, £15,837, agreed to.

Validation of Native-land titles, £1,250.

Mr. G. HUTCHISON asked whether the recommendations of Judge Barton in respect to the equipment of his Court had been acceded to.

Mr. SEDDON said that, so far as the officers and equipment of the Court were concerned, it was working satisfactorily.

Mr. G. HUTCHISON said when he was in Gisborne a very great deal of delay occurred in consequence of the Judge considering that his Court was not properly equipped, and he could assure the Premier that the official who had to act as Registrar, while engaged in other important duties, was overworked.

Mr. SEDDON said an extra clerk had been appointed, and he had relieved the Registrar to some extent. A proposal to exchange one of the officers was under consideration. If that change were made it would give further relief to the Registrar.

Mr. G. HUTCHISON asked whether the Premier had decided to give the Judge power to remit fees. In many cases, in the interests of indigent Natives, it was desirable that that power should be exercised.

Mr. SEDDON said this matter had been referred to the Law Officers. Certain provision was being made in this respect.

Mr. BELL asked if the equipment of the Court was satisfactory to the Judge.

Mr. SEDDON said there was at first considerable difficulty, but on making inquiries he now found that the Court was going on satisfactorily.

Mr. STEVENS said that on the west coast of the North Island, at Tauranga, and in the Auckland District, it was absolutely necessary that Validation Courts should be set up. There were other parts besides Gisborne which urgently required Courts to validate titles.

Mr. SEDDON said if the honourable member looked at the Native Land Court Bill he would find that power was given there for inquiry to be made in respect to the validation of titles, and if the honourable member looked at the estimates he would find provision made for two extra Judges.

Vote, £1,250, agreed to.

Vote, Criminal prosecutions, £9,850, agreed to.

"Coroners Act, 1867," £2,500.

Mr. PIRANI said that, with the fee of one guinea, it sometimes happened that in the country districts the fee and the travelling-expenses allowed did not cover the Coroner's expenses in holding an inquest.

Mr. CADMAN replied that in such cases the department was always willing to make a reasonable allowance.

Mr. MEREDITH thought that something considerable might be saved by allowing senior Justices to hold inquests.

Mr. CADMAN said that to some extent this was being done. Where Coroners had had to travel long distances it had been pointed out that Justices could act.

Item, £2,500, agreed to.

Vote, Prisons, £29,429, agreed to.

Miscellaneous services, £4,165.

Mr. MEREDITH asked if Mr. Ell had accepted the £200 the Royal Commission had recommended.

Mr. CADMAN said the cheque had been made out, but he believed Mr. Ell had not accepted or received the money.

Mr. PIRANI asked if the £150 for the Williams Commission included the payment of the expenses the Natives had been put to, and, if not, whether the Government had any intention of paying those expenses.

Mr. SEDDON said this was to meet the expenses of the Commission; but, the Natives having asked for the inquiry through their member, Mr. Taipua, the Government did not intend to pay their expenses. This sum was for reporter, secretary, and other expenses.

Mr. BELL said that, seeing that the Native vendors had been robbed, he hoped the Minister would consider that the credit of the colony was involved, and would put the law in motion against the wrong-doer.

Mr. SEDDON said the Government had no intention of dealing any further in the matter. The Government had, through their officer, very carefully paid over the money to the proper

Natives, but the Natives had taken Mr. Williams with them, had given him the cheque, and some days afterwards it was found that he did not come back with the money. If the Government were to be held responsible under such circumstances, he did not know what the taxpayers would think of it. The matter had occurred some ten or fifteen years ago. A Committee had inquired and reported upon it, but the question had been raised that they had not gone fully into it. The matter was again before a Committee, and it could be discussed when the report came up. Last year a promise had been given that a Commission should be appointed to inquire into the allegations, and this had been done. As to liability, he could not see that the State was in the slightest degree liable.

Mr. BELL did not say that the State was liable, but if Williams had been guilty of fraud which the criminal law could reach it should be set in motion, and, if the criminal law could not reach it, then the sooner the law was altered the better.

Mr. MITCHELSON quite agreed with the Premier that the State was not responsible in any shape respecting this transaction. The matter had been entered into many years ago by a previous Ministry, and every precaution had then been taken to have the money paid to the proper people, a responsible and most reliable officer being sent for the purpose, who paid the money into the hands of the Natives entitled to receive the same. The matter had again cropped up owing to the Government having, previous to last session, appointed this man Williams to a responsible position under the Public Trustee. As Williams had been bankrupt since the transactions referred to, the Natives could not recover from him; but he agreed that it was the duty of the Government to prosecute Williams for a criminal offence. There was the fact: Judge Kettle had reported that Williams had committed a criminal offence; and also it was a fact that he had been appointed under the Government to a position of trust.

Mr. SEDDON said that the honourable member had omitted a very important point, which was that, though the present Government, or, rather, the Public Trustee, had appointed Williams under the Native Reserves Act, they had done so after they had found that he had been appointed by their predecessors—the Government of which the honourable gentleman was a member—as a Native Interpreter. They were quite justified in assuming that, had he been guilty of an offence, he would not have been registered as an Interpreter, seeing that Interpreters must be persons above reproach. Seeing that he had been given an appointment under the hand of the Governor, it was only natural that they should assume that he was of good character, and that the Public Trustee should appoint him, as had been done. The Government that first gave him an appointment after the committal of the alleged offence must be held to be responsible, for after that the present Government had taken him to

be a person of good character. When the question was raised, they had promised a Commission of inquiry: that Commission had reported, and on the receipt of that report Williams had been asked to retire from the position to which he had been appointed.

Mr. PIRANI said the honourable gentleman stated that Mr. Bryce took every precaution that this money should be paid to the Natives. The precaution he took was that a cheque for nearly £6,000 was paid to the Natives in a place where there was no bank, the nearest place at which it could be cashed being miles away. That was a sample of the precaution taken. It was very unjust that the Natives, who gave evidence leading to the dismissal of this officer, should not be paid their expenses of attending that Commission.

Mr. G. HUTCHISON said the petition on this subject was to be considered probably next day by the Native Affairs Committee, and he believed there would be evidence produced which would show complicity between the agent of the Government and Williams.

Mr. HOUSTON deprecated the action of the Native Affairs Committee being anticipated in this way by the honourable member for Waitotara.

Mr. G. HUTCHISON said the allegation of the petition was that there was complicity between the agent of the Government and Williams.

Mr. SEDDON said Judge Kettle's report made it quite clear that there was no complicity.

Mr. G. HUTCHISON said that Judge Kettle's commission was to inquire into the conduct of Williams, and the Judge abstained from inquiring into the conduct of the Government agent, because it was not in his commission to inquire into it.

Mr. HEKE understood that a letter was sent to one Wiremu Kauika from one of the Government departments stating that the Natives would be paid their expenses in attending the Commission, and, if that was the case, it was only right the Government should see that they were paid as soon as possible.

Mr. G. HUTCHISON said it would be desirable to have Gill's evidence taken before the Committee, because, as far as the papers went, he seemed to be implicated with Williams.

Vote, Miscellaneous services, £4,165, agreed to.

CLASS V.—POSTAL AND TELEGRAPH DEPARTMENT.

Postal and Telegraph salaries, £186,779.

Mr. MITCHELSON asked if all the increases were in accordance with the system of regulation and classification.

Mr. WARD replied that they were.

Mr. MITCHELSON thought some better rule should be adopted with regard to the appointment of girls to the Telephone Department. He understood that many of the earlier applicants had not received appoint-

ments, while others who had quite recently applied had been appointed.

Mr. WARD said it was quite a mistake to suppose that some of the earlier applicants had not been appointed; but that rule could not always be strictly adhered to. He should be very glad to be relieved of the duty of making these appointments, and he would try to devise some plan by which that could be done.

Mr. PINKERTON said rumours were going about that appointments in the Post and Telegraph Departments were not made according to classification, and that juniors got over the heads of seniors by some means or other.

Mr. WARD did not think such was the case, but if the honourable gentleman brought such a case under his notice he would look into it.

Vote, £186,779, agreed to.

Vote, Telegraph cable services, £6,309, agreed to.

Conveyance of mails by sea, £98,175.

Mr. ALLEN asked if the Government intended to continue the San Francisco service.

Mr. WARD said, Yes, upon the same basis as at present, the other colonies contributing.

Dr. NEWMAN asked if the Minister proposed to make arrangements for a service between New Zealand and Canada.

Mr. WARD said that the Government had already intimated that they were prepared to give a subsidy of £10,000 if the steamers called at New Zealand. So far, there had been nothing definite placed before the Government. Such a service as this would be of considerable importance to New Zealand.

Mr. J. W. KELLY asked if it was intended to make any alteration in the service between Invercargill and Puysegur Point.

Mr. WARD said it was intended to carry on the service as at present, but perhaps some arrangement might be made by which mails might be carried more frequently between these places.

Vote, £98,175, agreed to.

Vote, Conveyance of inland mails, £30,140, agreed to.

Vote, Conveyance of mails by railway, £1,000, agreed to.

Vote, Miscellaneous, £50,100, agreed to.

CLASS I.—LEGISLATIVE.

Vote, Legislative Council, £1,700, agreed to. House of Representatives, £3,570.

Mr. SEDDON moved, That the item, "Serjeant-at-Arms (four months at £250), £83," be reduced by £17.

Motion agreed to.

Dr. NEWMAN said the sum for Interpreters had been reduced from £450 to £250. Last year Messrs. Hamlin and Mair acted as Interpreters, and this year they started with one Interpreter, but now there were two. It appeared, therefore, that they had dispensed with two Interpreters and now two had been appointed.

Mr. SEDDON said they had gone through two-thirds of the session with only one Inter-

preter. Only one Interpreter was wanted, and it had been arranged that during the recess that officer should do Government work. The present arrangement was working satisfactorily. If assistance was wanted to get Bills interpreted such assistance could always be obtained from the Native Department.

Dr. NEWMAN asked if the two officers were permanent officers.

Mr. SEDDON said they were, but one was paid out of the Native vote.

Vote, as reduced, £3,553, agreed to.

General expenses, £10,758, agreed to.

CLASS VI.—CUSTOMS AND MARINE.

Customs offices and services, £32,038.

Mr. J. W. KELLY drew attention to the increase in the item, "Secretary for Customs and Marine, £625." There was an increase of £25.

Mr. WARD said that the increase had been made because the officer was entitled to it. This officer was in receipt of a lower salary than the former occupant of the office. The officer formerly in charge of the Marine Department had been retired, and that department had been added to the Customs Department.

Mr. J. W. KELLY said everybody acknowledged the great ability of Mr. Glasgow; but he would ask if the financial position of the colony was such as to warrant increases in large salaries.

Mr. PIRANI moved, "That the increase of £25 be struck out.

Amendment negatived.

Vote, £32,038, agreed to.

Vote, Customs: Miscellaneous services, £1,410, agreed to.

Vote, Marine and Harbours, £21,016, agreed to.

Marine: Miscellaneous services, £10,381.

Dr. NEWMAN asked, in reference to the sale of the "Hinemoa" and "Stella," and the purchase of a new steamer, what the new boat was likely to cost.

Mr. WARD said the Government had an estimate from the department, and the estimated cost of a steamer to take the place of the "Hinemoa" was £12,000, and it would be a very much more suitable boat. Negotiations were going on for the sale of the "Stella," and, as to the "Terranora," nothing could be done until the new cable steamer to replace the existing one was arranged for. No vote, however, would be asked for this purpose until next year. The new steamer would perform the work of the "Hinemoa" and "Terranora."

Mr. MITCHELSON asked if the item, "Guaranteed interest to Wellington Patent Slip Company, £1,995," was the last payment.

Mr. WARD said it was.

Mr. MEREDITH asked if it would not be possible to exchange the "Stella" for a much larger vessel, which might be used as a training-ship for boys from the reformatory schools, who might be trained for our marine service. New South Wales had obtained a condemned man-of-war from England for this purpose, and Victoria had moved in the same direction.

Mr. Seddon

The "Stella" had been lying idle for the last eighteen months or two years. She was rather too small for a training-ship, but she might be exchanged for a larger vessel suitable for such a purpose.

Mr. WARD could assure the honourable member that if such an opportunity arose it would be availed of.

Vote, £10,381, agreed to.

CLASS XV.—DEPARTMENT OF LANDS AND SURVEY.

Department of Lands and Survey, £124,944.

Mr. PIRANI asked for an explanation of the increase of salary by £25 in the item "Superintending Surveyor and Under-Secretary for Crown Lands." In the estimates for 1890 this officer was only receiving £550, and it seemed extraordinary that he should be jumped up to £625.

Mr. J. MCKENZIE said the officer in question was at one time Superintendent of Surveys, but now he was, in addition, doing the duty of Under-Secretary. Any honourable gentleman who knew the gentleman knew there was no more deserving officer in the department. He was at his work all hours of the day and night; and £25 was a very small increase under the circumstances.

Mr. PIRANI moved, That the item be reduced by £25.

The Committee divided.

AYES, 13.

Carncross	McGuire	Tanner.
Green	McNab	
Heke	Pirani	<i>Tellers.</i>
Kelly, J. W.	Saunders	Maslin
Massey	Smith, G. J.	Meredith.

NOES, 38.

Allen	Houston	Pinkerton
Buddo	Kelly, W.	Reeves
Buick	Lang	Russell, W. R.
Button	Larnach	Seddon
Cadman	Lawry	Smith, E. M.
Carnell	Mackenzie, T.	Stevens
Carroll	McKenzie, J.	Thompson
Collins	McLachlan	Ward
Duncan	Mills	Willis
Flatman	Montgomery	Wilson.
Hall-Jones	Newman	<i>Tellers.</i>
Harris	O'Regan	Joyce
Hogg	Parata	McGowan.

Majority against, 25.

Amendment negatived.

Mr. PIRANI moved to reduce "Taranaki District, £3,820," by £25.

Mr. J. W. KELLY asked the Minister whether he would consider the claim of Craig, of Invercargill, for a share in the preparation of lithographic plans of lands for sale, which used to be intrusted to him, but which the present Government had ceased to give him.

Mr. J. MCKENZIE said it was impossible to comply with the honourable gentleman's request and give a portion of this work to a private firm in Invercargill, unless the Government were prepared to do the same in every

district. Moreover, the work could not be done as well as by the department; and to do as the honourable gentleman requested would entail loss of time and inconvenience.

Amendment negatived.

Dr. NEWMAN asked the Minister whether he would not survey the rest of the Waimarino Block. It seemed to him a great pity that it should lie idle year after year for want of surveys.

Mr. J. McKENZIE said they were pushing the survey on in that district at the present time. Next summer they would send more survey parties to the block; but there were several years before the leases would expire, and until they expired it was only throwing money away to survey the land in small areas.

Dr. NEWMAN said there were no leases of the land to the north—the Tongariro Block.

Mr. J. McKENZIE said they intended to send survey parties there, and they would receive instructions to survey such country as was likely to be disposed of.

Vote, £124,944, agreed to.

Miscellaneous services, £8,147.

Mr. MASSEY would like to have some information regarding the item, "Refund of costs to Joseph Bowmar, as recommended by the Waste Lands Committee, £214." He understood that through some mistake in the survey this man was involved in a lawsuit which resulted in costs to that amount. The Waste Lands Committee last year recommended that the money should be refunded. It had been voted by the House, but not paid. He wished to know if any provision would be made for its payment.

Mr. J. McKENZIE said the position was that the charge made to the department was very much larger than £214. A Committee had made a recommendation this year which the Government would consider, and he intended to make provision on the supplementary estimates.

Mr. ALLEN desired information regarding the item, "Interest on £2,000, part purchase-money of Stewart Island."

Mr. J. McKENZIE said that had been in existence for the last twenty-five years. The interest had not been claimed. It had accumulated from year to year, but they must provide for it in the event of Natives claiming it.

Mr. WILSON desired to say that some of the village settlers had been charged as much as £15 an acre for their land, though similar land was now offered at an upset of £6 10s. and £7. He wished to know if the Minister could do anything to reduce these payments.

Mr. J. McKENZIE said there was no process by which the Minister of Lands could do what was suggested. It was true the village settlers referred to had bought at the time of the land-boom, and in the scramble for land had given high prices. All he could suggest was that they should apply to be allowed to surrender their sections, and that the sections should be revalued.

Mr. WILSON said that the settlers were afraid, if they did that, they might lose their sections. If they had the assurance of the Minister that they would get their land back, no doubt they would agree to surrender.

Mr. J. McKENZIE said that he could not give that assurance; the law would not permit him to give that assurance; but valuation would be given for improvements, the sections would be loaded with that valuation, and so every person would have a good chance of getting his own section again, and the worst that could happen would be that he would get valuation for his improvements.

Mr. ALLEN would like to know how many State farms there were.

Mr. J. McKENZIE said there was but one State farm, but there were a number of what were called improvement farms. On these improvement farms the selectors got fifty acres; they were paid to fell the bush and to sow grass, and then were charged interest upon the cost of doing this along with interest on the value of the land. The one State farm was worked under the Labour Bureau. He could not say how many people were on it, but no doubt the Minister of Labour would give that explanation.

Mr. PIRANI asked if it was the intention of the Government to bring in a Bill this session to make members of Land Boards elective.

Mr. J. McKENZIE said, No.

Mr. ALLEN said that last year there was £2,100 on the estimates in connection with State forests. Did the Minister intend to re-establish this department?

Mr. J. McKENZIE said he proposed this year to take a vote for the same purpose. There was a certain amount of money belonging to the State Forests Department which was paid into that fund; and he hoped during the recess to be able to establish the department on a moderate scale.

Mr. WILSON expressed a hope that the Minister would carry on the planting of trees at Tongariro, where, he believed, a valuable State forest could be established.

Mr. J. McKENZIE said he would consider the suggestion. The first thing to be done in connection with these forest reserves was to fence the land, so as to prevent the destruction of the plantations when made.

Vote, Miscellaneous services, £8,147, agreed to.

CLASS XVI.—RATES ON CROWN LANDS.

Vote, rates on Crown lands, £800, agreed to.

CLASS XVII.—NEW ZEALAND STATE FORESTS ACCOUNT.

State Forests Branch of the Lands and Survey Department, £2,100.

Dr. NEWMAN pointed out the desirability of getting a few acres around Wellington and Auckland for the purpose of forming small orchards for the instruction of those who desired to go in for the cultivation of fruit. He thought the State orchard at Whangarei was too far out of the way to be of much service.

Mr. J. McKENZIE said the Government were not now spending money at Whangarei as before. They had established an orchard near Waverley.

Mr. THOMPSON would like to hear some explanation with regard to the item, "Inspector, £450."

Mr. J. McKENZIE said there was no Inspector at present. The proposal was to employ an Inspector, and they wished to take the vote for his salary in case they obtained the services of an Inspector during the recess. Several large areas had already been reserved as State forests, and there would be plenty of work for an Inspector to do.

Mr. J. W. KELLY hoped that steps would be taken to watch the bush in Southland, so that the State might obtain the proper value for the timber. He thought one of the three Inspectors should be stationed in that part of the colony.

Dr. NEWMAN directed the attention of the Minister to the desirableness of preventing the ravages which were now being made by small settlers in various portions of the bush-lands.

Mr. J. McKENZIE said that every effort would be made to preserve all the forest reserves. The totara land had been reserved in the Waimarino Block, and instructions had been given to the surveyors to reserve certain portions of all good forest-land amongst the settlers.

Mr. G. J. SMITH asked if there was any planting of the wattle-tree going on. At present a large quantity of wattle-bark was being imported into the colony.

Mr. J. McKENZIE said that during the last few years a good deal of attention had been paid to this description of trees.

Mr. LARNACH said the planting of wattle was only throwing away money, because the trees could only stand one stripping.

Vote, £2,100, agreed to.

CLASS XVIII.—CHEVIOT ESTATE ACCOUNT.

Cheviot Estate expenses, £13,527.

Mr. ALLEN asked why this vote appeared on the estimates.

Mr. J. McKENZIE said the purchase of the estate cost £260,000 odd, and the power which the Government received to issue debentures was only for £250,000, so that they were £10,000 short. This money would be paid out of the Cheviot Estate Account to the consolidated revenue, but had to be voted by the House. £1,529 was for the purchase of machinery at Port Robinson—for the purchase of engines, boats, and the gear necessary for the landing-service. The other item, £1,778, represented sums of money paid out of consolidated revenue before the Government had authority from the House on the subject. It was necessary to get these sums voted to place the consolidated revenue in its proper position.

Mr. ALLEN said, with regard to the purchase-money, that would no doubt be included in the Act of last year; and as to the other items, he imagined those were also included.

Mr. J. McKENZIE said, as to the other

items, the Audit Department refused to pay them out of the Cheviot Fund.

Vote, £13,527, agreed to.

CLASS XIII.—DEFENCE DEPARTMENT.

Defence Department, £950.

Mr. ALLEN asked what was Colonel Fox's position at the present moment.

Mr. SEDDON said there was no Commandant, but the Government hoped satisfactory arrangements would be made with Colonel Fox to act as Military Adviser to the Government.

Mr. ALLEN asked if no arrangement was made now.

Mr. SEDDON said, No, it was not complete; arrangements were pending.

Mr. PIRANI moved, That the vote be struck out.

Mr. MEREDITH was under the impression that the Commandant had severed his connection with the Service. He had thought the Defence Department was going to be conducted on economical lines: and there were men in the colony who were capable of performing the necessary duties. He did not think the services of this gentleman were required at all. There was a strong feeling in the first place against the Government importing this gentleman from the Old Country. It was felt that there were men in the colony who were perfectly competent to do this work.

Mr. G. J. SMITH hoped the services of this officer would be retained. He (Mr. Smith) was very anxious to see some reorganization of the Volunteer Force. To have proper reorganization you must have a gentleman who thoroughly understood defence matters, and he believed it was very generally conceded that Colonel Fox had that knowledge. The only question was, How far was he going to be allowed to apply that knowledge?

Mr. SEDDON said negotiations were pending in this matter. There would be due regard to economy as well as efficiency.

The Committee divided.

AYES, 33.

Allen	Mackintosh	Russell, W. R.
Buddo	Massey	Seddon
Cadman	McGowan	Smith, E. M.
Carncross	McGuire	Smith, G. J.
Carroll	McKenzie, J.	Stevens
Collins	McLachlan	Steward
Flatman	McNab	Ward
Hall-Jones	Mitchelson	Wilson.
Heke	Newman	<i>Tellers.</i>
Joyce	Parata	Mills
Lang	Reeves	Montgomery.
Larnach		

NOES, 18.

Buick	Hogg	O'Regan
Carnell	Houston	Pinkerton
Duncan	Kelly, J. W.	Tanner.
Graham	Kelly, W.	<i>Tellers.</i>
Green	Lawry	Meredith
Hall	Maslin	Pirani.
Harris		

Majority for, 15.

Amendment negatived.

Vote, £950, agreed to.

Permanent Militia and Volunteers, £50,629.

Mr. ALLEN said some of the Militia were employed in giving instruction to the Volunteers. Would the Minister say how much the Permanent Militia were receiving for that work, more particularly for the instruction given at the batteries? Would the Minister say whether he could not see his way to increase the amount to something like what it was originally? The Permanent Militia were doing extremely good work as regarded the Volunteers in giving instruction. He thought, as these men had to give up their Saturday afternoons, and do a great deal of work outside their ordinary duty, they should receive encouragement.

Mr. SEDDON would make inquiries into the matter. It was his desire to encourage these men. He had heard no complaints, so far, and it was somewhat difficult to know how to keep men out of the Force at the present rate of pay.

Mr. HOGG moved to reduce the vote by £3,000. Last year the amount spent was only £47,078, and the feeling throughout the country was that too much was spent in defence altogether.

Mr. SEDDON said it was quite true the amount put down as spent was only £47,078, but the estimates were reduced this year by £3,000, as a matter of fact. There must necessarily be liabilities in the case of these estimates, which came in afterwards, such as capitation-grants, *et cetera*. He asked the Committee not to agree to the reduction.

Dr. NEWMAN asked whether the Premier would not reconsider his decision with regard to the members of the Permanent Artillery being compelled to wear uniform always. He thought they should be allowed, when off duty, a certain amount of freedom in dress.

Mr. BUDDO thought the Permanent Force appeared to be rather over-officered, there being, apparently, 177 men and 28 officers.

Mr. SEDDON explained that the duties of these officers were not entirely in connection with the Permanent Force. There were, for instance, the District Commanders in each of the four principal cities, whose duties were not restricted to the Permanent Artillery.

Mr. W. KELLY wished to know why the Officer Commanding and District Adjutant at Auckland was only put down for £50, while those in Wellington, Canterbury, and Dunedin were getting £300.

Mr. SEDDON explained that only a part of this officer's salary appeared in this part of the estimates.

Mr. O'REGAN would support the amendment of the honourable member for Masterton. He protested against the extravagant sum spent in defence. There was, for instance, one item—a very small one, certainly—"Westland—Drill-instructor (also Magazine Keeper, nil), £128." This seemed to him a case illustrating how money was thrown away, and he failed to see what good this drill-instructing did. The money at present spent on defence would be far better spent on roads.

Captain RUSSELL could not agree with the contention of the honourable member for Inangahua. If he contended that there should be no Defence Force at all he might understand the honourable gentleman's position; but, having one, it must be organized; and, in the event of European complications, the first point of attack by an enemy of Great Britain would be the colonies. With regard to the remark that had been made about the Force being over-officered, he would point out that it was considerably under-officered, and that if the forts had to be made use of it would be difficult to find sufficient officers to man them.

Mr. G. J. SMITH said there was a great deal of dissatisfaction in some of the districts with regard to Volunteering, because it was thought the Volunteers did not get that encouragement from the Government which they ought to have. What New Zealand required more than close battalion drill was practice in open skirmishing order. That should be more encouraged. The system of uniforms was appalling to any beholder when one saw so many corps of exactly the same class in totally different uniforms.

Mr. SEDDON said, in reply to the question asked a short time ago by the honourable member for Wellington Suburbs, that he would confer with his advisers as to whether there should be any relaxation of the regulations in regard to uniform. The question of obtaining uniforms would also be carefully considered, as would also the question of disbanding certain corps. At present he was not encouraging some of the corps to continue, so that in that way some of the corps might disband without any friction being caused. The great thing, he considered, to place the Volunteers on a better footing was to supply them with the Martini rifles. Five hundred of those rifles would be here in a few days, and he wished to thoroughly test them before ordering any more.

Mr. CARNCROSS greatly approved of the Martini-Henry rifle. He would like to know when they were to have a new set of Volunteer regulations.

Mr. SEDDON said the new regulations came before him yesterday.

Mr. CARNCROSS said, with regard to the uniforms, until the new regulations were in force officers could not tell what uniforms to get for their men, and yet unless the men were uniformed they could not earn their capitation.

Mr. SEDDON said that matter would be settled in the course of a few days.

Mr. MONTGOMERY referred to the case of the Canterbury Yeomanry Cavalry, who provided their own uniforms and horses, and were put to great expense in other ways during the year. Some of the equipments that were provided by the Government were falling to pieces, and he hoped something would be done to put them in repair. The cavalry should be provided with more modern rifles.

Mr. HOGG said, so far from the Volunteer movement reviving in his district, it was de-

olining, simply because the country Volunteers were neglected. He objected to a small standing army being created in the towns, while the Volunteers in the country were allowed to die out. He agreed with the remark of some honourable members, that this vote ought to be cut down, and the money devoted to the purposes of settlement.

Mr. BUICK asked if the Minister proposed to appoint an officer to command the Marlborough Volunteers.

Mr. SEDDON thought something would shortly be done.

Mr. BUDDO said the weapons of the Volunteer Force were unsuitable, and the Force would have to be armed with more suitable weapons if Volunteering was to succeed. He would also like to see the country corps receiving more benefit.

Mr. O'REGAN considered it undesirable that a lot of fine young men, who could be better employed, should be attracted to the ranks of the Torpedo Corps; and he protested against the money spent on reviews and encampments. He supported the motion moved by the honourable member for Masterton.

Mr. McNAB said that no Volunteer who prided himself on his shooting would shoot with the weapons supplied from the Government stores. At present any Volunteer or private gentleman who went in for shooting paid full price for his rifle and ammunition, which, therefore, did not cost the Government a farthing.

Mr. ALLEN asked if the Minister would favourably consider the advisability of securing a better rifle-range in Dunedin, or close to it.

Mr. SEDDON said he would go into the matter with the honourable gentleman later on.

Mr. HARRIS said the corps in the country districts were suffering from the reduction in the capitation, and it would be better for the Government to allow them to disband if they could not assist them. In the case of mounted corps outside the radius of ten miles, the men had to attend eighteen parades in the year, and two-thirds of the corps must be present in order to gain capitation for the company. He asked the Government to make some allowance in the shape of paying the men for attendance. If, however, the Government did not require the services of the Volunteer Force, they should allow them to disband.

The Committee divided.

AYES, 11.

Buick	Kelly, J. W.	Smith, E. M.
Green	Kelly, W.	<i>Tellers.</i>
Hall	Maslin	Hogg
Houston	Meredith	O'Regan.

NOES, 37.

Allen	Duncan	Larnach
Buddo	Graham	Lawry
Cadman	Hall-Jones	Massey
Carnarross	Harris	McGowan
Carroll	Heke	McKenzie, J.
Collins	Joyce	McKenzie, R.
Crowther	Lang	McNab

Mr. Hogg

Mills	Reeves	Tanner
Mitchelson	Russell, W. R.	Ward.
Montgomery	Seddon	
Newman	Smith, G. J.	<i>Tellers.</i>
Parata	Stevens	Flatman
Pinkerton	Steward	McLachlan.

Majority against, 26.

Amendment negatived.

Vote, £50,629, agreed to.

Vote, Stores and magazines, £2,772, agreed to.

Vote, Miscellaneous services, £8,376, agreed to.

CLASS XIV.—POLICE DEPARTMENT.

Police Department, £97,742.

Dr. NEWMAN believed it would be a very great advantage if the police were kept moving around, instead of their being kept for long periods of time in the particular districts in which they were stationed. He asked if the Premier could see his way to make some change in that direction—say, a change of stations every five or six years.

Mr. SEDDON said there was a great deal to be said in favour of a periodical shifting of constables. It had proved very beneficial in the case of the Inspectors, and if beneficial in the case of the officers it ought to be equally beneficial in the case of the men. The only trouble was the expense. Then, the people of the districts did not like it; but he believed there should be some rule laid down that constables should be allowed to remain only for a certain time in any one district. If it were made a rule it would work beneficially. He would go into the matter and see what would be the cost. He was inclined to think it would be very expensive.

Mr. R. McKENZIE thought it would be a great disadvantage to have the constables moved around. A constable was of most use when he had got acquainted with a district, and it took him a few years to do that. The constables were already shifted too often. He knew that when, some years ago, the constables were shifted from the West Coast to the North Island it gave very great dissatisfaction.

Mr. HOGG said it was a very hard thing for a man who had a wife and family to, after having made for himself a home and started the cultivation of a garden, suddenly find that he was called upon to shift to another district. The constable would never know from day to day when he might have to move elsewhere at the instigation of somebody. The process was a thoroughly cruel one. They had no more right to trot the police about from one district to another than any other officers of the Civil Service.

Captain RUSSELL pointed out that the constables had the option of remaining in the service or leaving it. It was undoubtedly the case that, in proportion as a constable became well known in a district, and contracted intimate friendships with members of the community, his efficiency diminished, and he ceased to have the deterrent effect he ought to have. He (Captain Russell) wanted to know

why the amount expended on First- and Second-class constables was £2,000 less than that voted. Was it in consequence of a decrease in the number, or how came it that there was this reduction?

Mr. SEDDON did not believe in fixing too short a time for the removal of constables. Certain constables had been twenty years in one place; others, again, had been shifted every year or two years. There was injustice in this want of system, and there was friction. He thought if a period was fixed for the removal of a constable it would be more satisfactory to the officer, and in the interest of the Force. With regard to the increase, that was due to increasing the number of constables—with new townships more constables were required—and it was also partly due to promotions. Those who had been for seven years in the Third Class without a black mark against them were put into the Second Class, and some from the Second Class were promoted to the First. They had now a number of men who, if necessity arose, could man the guns at the batteries, and the Police Force was in a satisfactory condition.

Captain RUSSELL said the explanation was quite satisfactory as to the increase.

Mr. MONTGOMERY did not know whether the Premier was aware of it, but he was told that some constables got an allowance for fuel, while others did not.

Mr. SEDDON said he would make inquiry into this matter.

Mr. G. J. SMITH wished to know on what system promotions were granted—whether they were made in accordance with recognised rules, or on the report of Inspectors.

Mr. SEDDON said the grounds of promotion were special services, good conduct, merit, and a clean defaulters' sheet.

Mr. PIRANI asked if the Premier intended to strengthen the police at Palmerston North. It was very necessary that the Force there should be strengthened.

Mr. SEDDON said he would give the matter favourable consideration.

Mr. E. M. SMITH thought there was something wrong in connection with the promotion of constables. There was a man serving in Wellington who had two good-conduct medals, a long-service medal, a Humane Society medal, and a war medal; he had been twenty-three years in the service, had a clean defaulters' sheet, no record against him, and still he had received no promotion.

Mr. SEDDON said if there was such a case it must be the result of an oversight, and he should be only too glad to rectify it.

Mr. O'REGAN thought the police should be shifted periodically, but not too often.

Vote, £97,742, agreed to.

Miscellaneous services, £393.

Mr. BELL expressed the hope that the Government would consider the desirableness of increasing the rewards for the discovery of sly grog-selling.

Mr. CARNCROSS said there was a system which prevailed amongst the police in Welling-

ton under which the police constables were practically prisoners: if a constable were found a quarter of a mile from home or from the station when off duty he was fined for it.

Mr. SEDDON said he had never heard of this, but would inquire into it.

Vote, £393, agreed to.

Progress reported.

The House adjourned at twenty minutes past one o'clock a.m.

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

Wednesday, 29th August, 1894.

Second Reading—Third Readings—Animals Protection Bill—Oaths Bill—Divorce and Matrimonial Causes Bill.

The Hon. the SPEAKER took the chair at half-past two o'clock.

PRAYERS.

SECOND READING.

Invercargill Racecourse Trustees Empowering Bill.

THIRD READINGS.

Timaru Harbour Reclamation Bill, Wellington City Drainage Empowering Bill.

ANIMALS PROTECTION BILL.

The Hon. Sir P. A. BUCKLEY, in moving, *That this Bill be now read the second time*, said the object of the Bill was to prevent the introduction into the colony of objectionable birds, animals, or reptiles. It had been introduced at the request of the acclimatisation societies in the South, because there was a rumour circulated that a certain bird known as the wood-pigeon was about to be introduced by a certain acclimatisation society.

The Hon. Mr. FELDWICK desired to mention that a few months ago, at the request of the Southland Acclimatisation Society, he had waited on the Hon. Mr. Ward, Colonial Treasurer, with the object of getting this Bill introduced, with the intention of preventing the introduction of a bird called the wood-pigeon. This bird multiplied at a great rate; it was a very shy bird, and was terribly destructive to such crops as young growing peas, *et cetera*. He might say that the Canterbury Society had abandoned their idea of introducing this pest, and possibly the object would be attained without legislation. At the same time, the Southland Society was desirous that somebody should have the power of veto as regarded the introduction of birds or animals that might prove to be noxious.

The Hon. Mr. JENKINSON would like to see the maximum penalty under the Bill increased, because on many occasions—in the South especially—reptiles had been introduced into the colony in the ballast from ships. A penalty of £20 would not prove sufficient, he thought, to effect a remedy, because, if a man had a shipload of ballast to get rid of, the matter of such a penalty was neither here nor

there. He would ask the Minister if he would increase the fine to £50.

The Hon. Sir P. A. BUCKLEY said he would make it £100 if the honourable gentleman liked.

Bill read the second time.

OATHS BILL.

The Hon. Sir P. A. BUCKLEY said he believed that this Bill was the first permissive Bill of this kind ever introduced into that Chamber. He trusted he would not be accused of levity if he said the object of the Bill was to extend the method of swearing. At present they had in the New Zealand Courts a form of oath and also an affirmation, but certain persons objected to both, and considered that something in the nature of a Scotch form of oath ought to be introduced as the form which would be most binding on their conscience. The object of the Bill was to enable a person to swear in the form prescribed in the 2nd section—namely, “I swear by Almighty God, as I shall answer to God at the great day of judgment, that I will speak the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth.” He moved, *That the Bill be now read the second time.*

The Hon. Mr. BONAR cordially supported the second reading of the Bill. He had seen the oath administered in the Scotch and in our own Courts, and he could only say that the form as laid down in the Bill was by far the most solemn form of oath they could have; and the more solemn they could make any oath the better it would be, he thought, in the interests of justice and right-doing.

The Hon. Mr. SHRIMSKI agreed with the last speaker, but he would like to ask the Minister to give instructions to the officers who administered the oath in the Courts to speak up plainly, instead of rushing the formula through. At present the administration of oaths in the Courts of this colony was a perfect farce, as regarded the manner in which they were administered to the witnesses by officers.

The Hon. Mr. MACGREGOR was very glad to see the change proposed in the Bill. It had been said that the present method of administering oaths was in very many cases a perfect farce: and he agreed with that. It was a disgrace to our Courts of justice. But he also thought it was something very much worse; it was so conducted as to, in many cases, bring the whole procedure into contempt. The method followed of kissing the book was a very objectionable method of administering the oath. The Bill was an important one in this respect: that it was not necessary for a witness when an oath was administered to state that he had any objection to taking the oath in the ordinary form. The Bill made it optional with witnesses as to the form in which the oath should be administered. That was in every way a desirable change, instead of the present system, under which the witness had to declare that he had conscientious objections to an oath, before a declaration could be subtituted. The last clause of the Bill pro-

vided that the officer or person administering the oath should hold up his hand. According to the Scotch procedure it was the Judge or Magistrate who administered the oath; and if oaths were to be retained at all he thought they should endeavour, as far as possible, to maintain in the administration of the oath some kind of decorum and solemnity. It should be required that an oath should be administered not by an officer, who was perhaps writing at the time, but by the Judge himself. That was the procedure in the Scotch Courts, and he thought that should be the form here. Personally he did not believe that oaths were necessary, and he would be prepared to see them abolished altogether, and the law amended in the direction of providing that a witness, when taking his position on the witness-stand, should be liable to all the pains and penalties that at present followed the taking of an oath, without anything in the nature of an imprecation or malediction. Perhaps, however, they were not prepared to go to that extent at present. That was his opinion, and he should be very glad to support a change in the law in that direction. He recognised that this Bill was a distinct step in the right direction, and he should cordially support it.

The Hon. W. DOWNIE STEWART desired to call attention to the fact that the Bill made no provision for punishing false oaths of this kind. It seemed to him necessary that the Bill should state that an oath taken in the form mentioned should subject the person to all the pains and penalties provided for under the present system of taking oaths; otherwise the whole proceeding might be futile. In previous cases where alterations had been made in the law relating to the taking of oaths this precaution had been adopted, but in the present Bill that safeguard had been omitted, and it would be well to see that it was put in. With regard to the Hon. Mr. MacGregor's remarks, a mere bailiff under this Act had no authority to administer an oath.

The Hon. Mr. MACGREGOR.—I said the Clerk of the Court.

The Hon. W. DOWNIE STEWART said that officer had no power to administer oaths under this Bill, which provided that “any Court, Judge, Justice, officer, arbitrator, or other person” should have the power to administer the oath, and any officer who was not acting in a judicial or in any similar capacity would have no power under the Bill to administer an oath. Under the present form the person authorised took the Bible in his hand, and it was not necessary that he should be any particular officer, but, where it was defined that a particular person should administer the oath, then the oath administered by any other person would have no effect.

The Hon. Sir P. A. BUCKLEY said he intended, as this Bill proposed a change in the law, to send it to the Joint Statutes Revision Committee, where the matter would be fully investigated. He quite agreed with those honourable members who had said that the

Hon. Mr. Jenkinson

present system of administering oaths in Courts of justice was a perfect disgrace; and one wondered how the system had endured so long. With regard to the general question of administering oaths at all, he was of the same opinion as the Hon. Mr. MacGregor. He would as soon have a man's word as his oath, because if a man did not wish to tell the truth the fact of his kissing the book would not make him.

Bill read the second time.

DIVORCE AND MATRIMONIAL CAUSES BILL.

IN COMMITTEE.

Clause 3.—Divorce, in what cases.

The Hon. Mr. BOWEN moved, That the following subsection be struck out:—

“(2.) On the ground that the respondent has without just cause wilfully deserted the petitioner, and without any such cause left him or her continuously so deserted during three years or upwards.”

The Committee divided on the question, “That the subsection stand part of the clause.”

AYES, 18.

Acland	MacGregor	Pharazyn
Barnicoat	McCullough	Rigg
Bolt	McLean	Shrimski
Jenkinson	Montgomery	Stevens
Jennings	Morris	Stewart
Kenny	Oliver	Swanson.

NOES, 13.

Bonar	Grace	Reynolds
Bowen	Holmes	Richardson
Buckley	Kerr	Whitmore
Dignan	Ormond	Williams.
Feldwick		

Majority for, 5.

Subsection retained.

The Hon. W. DOWNIE STEWART moved, That the words, “after the coming into operation of this Act,” be inserted after the words “respondent has.”

The Committee divided.

AYES, 16.

Barnicoat	Grace	Ormond
Bonar	Holmes	Pharazyn
Bowen	Kerr	Reynolds
Buckley	Montgomery	Stewart
Dignan	Morris	Williams.
Feldwick		

NOES, 14.

Acland	MacGregor	Rigg
Bolt	McCullough	Shrimski
Jenkinson	McLean	Stevens
Jennings	Oliver	Swanson.
Kenny	Richardson	

Majority for, 2.

Words inserted.

The Hon. Mr. BONAR moved, That the word “seven” be inserted in place of the word “three,” which had been struck out.

The Committee divided.

AYES, 13.

Acland	Feldwick	Ormond
Bonar	Grace	Richardson
Bowen	Holmes	Whitmore
Buckley	Kerr	Williams.
Dignan		

NOES, 17.

Barnicoat	McCullough	Rigg
Bolt	McLean	Shrimski
Jenkinson	Montgomery	Stevens
Jennings	Morris	Stewart
Kenny	Oliver	Swanson.
MacGregor	Pharazyn	

Majority against, 4.

Amendment negatived.

The Hon. Sir G. S. WHITMORE moved, That the words “five years” be inserted in lieu of “three years.”

The Committee divided.

AYES, 10.

Bonar	Feldwick	Walker, L.
Bowen	Holmes	Whitmore
Buckley	Jennings	Williams.
Dignan		

NOES, 14.

Acland	McCullough	Rigg
Barnicoat	McLean	Shrimski
Bolt	Montgomery	Stewart
Jenkinson	Morris	Swanson.
MacGregor	Pollen	

Majority against, 4.

Amendment negatived.

The Hon. Sir P. A. BUCKLEY moved, That the words “four years and nine months” be inserted in lieu of “three years.”

The Committee divided.

AYES, 10.

Bonar	Feldwick	Walker, L.
Bowen	Grace	Whitmore
Buckley	Holmes	Williams.
Dignan		

NOES, 16.

Acland	McCullough	Rigg
Barnicoat	McLean	Shrimski
Bolt	Montgomery	Stevens
Jenkinson	Morris	Stewart
Jennings	Pollen	Swanson.
MacGregor		

Majority against, 6.

Amendment negatived.

The Hon. Mr. McLEAN moved, That the words “four years” be inserted.

Amendment agreed to.

The Hon. Mr. BOWEN moved, That the following subsection—(3)—be struck out:—

“On the ground that the respondent has during three years or upwards been a habitual drunkard, and either habitually left his wife without the means of support or habitually been guilty of cruelty towards her, or, being the petitioner's wife, has for a like period been a habitual drunkard and habitually neglected her duties or rendered herself unfit to discharge them.”

The Committee divided on the question, “That the subsection stand part of the clause.”

AYES, 11.

Bolt	McLean	Stevens
Jenkinson	Montgomery	Stewart
MacGregor	Pollen	Swanson.
McCullough	Shrimski	

NOES, 15.

Acland	Dignan	Morris
Barnicoat	Feldwick	Rigg
Bonar	Grace	Walker, L.
Bowen	Holmes	Whitmore
Buckley	Jennings	Williams.

Majority against, 4.

Subsection struck out.

Subsection (4).—"On the ground that at the time of the presentation of the petition the respondent has been imprisoned for a period of not less than three years, and is still in prison under a commuted sentence for a capital crime, or under sentence to penal servitude for seven years or upwards, or, being a husband, has within five years undergone frequent convictions for crime and been sentenced in the aggregate to imprisonment for three years or upwards, and habitually left his wife without the means of support."

The Hon. Mr. BONAR moved, That this subsection be struck out.

The Committee divided on the question, "That the subsection stand part of the clause."

AYES, 15.

Barnicoat	McCullough	Pollen
Bolt	McLean	Rigg
Jenkinson	Montgomery	Shrimski
Jennings	Morris	Stewart
MacGregor	Pharazyn	Swanson.

NOES, 13.

Acland	Feldwick	Stevens
Bonar	Grace	Walker, L.
Bowen	Holmes	Whitmore
Buckley	Kerr	Williams.
Dignan		

Majority for, 2.

Subsection retained.

The Hon. Sir G. S. WHITMORE moved, That all the words after the words "seven years or upwards" be struck out.

The Committee divided on the question, "That the words proposed to be omitted stand part of the subsection."

AYES, 9.

Bolt	McLean	Shrimski
MacGregor	Montgomery	Stewart
McCullough	Pollen	Swanson.

NOES, 18.

Acland	Feldwick	Morris
Barnicoat	Grace	Pharazyn
Bonar	Holmes	Rigg
Bowen	Jenkinson	Walker, L.
Buckley	Jennings	Whitmore
Dignan	Kerr	Williams.

Majority against, 9.

Words struck out.

Subsection (5).—"On the ground that within one year previously to the presentation of the petition the respondent has been convicted of

having attempted to murder the petitioner, or of having assaulted him or her with intent to inflict grievous bodily harm, or on the ground that the respondent has repeatedly, during that period, assaulted and cruelly beaten the petitioner."

The Hon. Mr. BONAR moved, That all the words after the words "bodily harm" be struck out.

The Committee divided on the question, "That the words proposed to be omitted stand part of the subsection."

AYES, 14.

Bolt	Montgomery	Shrimski
Jenkinson	Morris	Stevens
MacGregor	Pharazyn	Swanson
McCullough	Pollen	Walker, L.
McLean	Rigg	

NOES, 14.

Acland	Dignan	Kerr
Barnicoat	Feldwick	Stewart
Bonar	Grace	Whitmore
Bowen	Holmes	Williams.
Buckley	Jennings	

The Hon. the CHAIRMAN gave his casting-vote with the "Noes," to give the Committee an opportunity of deciding what course to take.

Progress reported.

The Council adjourned at twenty minutes past nine o'clock p.m.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.

Wednesday, 29th August, 1894.

First Readings—E. H. McCullough—Wheat and Flour Duty—Feilding and Hunterville Post-offices—Colonel Fox—Vaile Railway System—Licensing Elections—Consolidated Fund—Fernhill Railway—Gaming Bill—Referendum Bill.

Mr. SPEAKER took the chair at half-past two o'clock.

PRAYERS.

FIRST READINGS.

New Zealand Company's Land Claimants Bill, Lake Forsyth Drainage Bill.

E. H. McCULLOUGH.

Mr. MCGOWAN asked the Minister of Justice, If his attention has been called to the death of the boy Eric Hart McCullough, at Auckland, and the consequent committal of one James Beard for alleged manslaughter? If so, will the Government so amend the Medical Practitioners Act as to make it a protection to the public in reality, instead of in name only as at present? He would point out that the Act did not at present extend any protection to the public, and constant injury was being done, of which the public had no knowledge till a fatal case occurred.

Mr. SEDDON explained that "The Medical Practitioners Registration Act, 1869," did not prevent an unregistered person from giving advice or medicine if patients were willing

to trust such a person. The law—which was the same as that of all the other Australasian Colonies, he believed,—made it penal for any person to wilfully or falsely pretend to be, or to take the style of, a physician, surgeon, general practitioner, or apothecary, or any name implying that he was registered. An unregistered person could not recover fees for medical or surgical advice, or attendance, or for the performance of an operation (section 19), or for any medicine prescribed or supplied. An unregistered person could not sign a medical certificate of cause of death, or any other certificate required to be signed by a medical man, nor could he or she hold any Government medical appointments. He did not yet see how the law could be made closer. If here and there mischief was done by unqualified persons, he was not prepared to say off-hand that this could be avoided. Pharmaceutical chemists were constantly prescribing drugs, and it would be hard to prevent other persons who were not of the faculty—hydro-paths, herbalists, bone-setters, *et cetera*—from treating patients who would take the risk of employing them. In McCullough's case there was an inquest, and everything had come to light. Beard treated at least two other people, who died. On applying to the Registrar, the proper medical certificate, which must be signed by the registered medical attendant of deceased at his last illness, if there was one, was not forthcoming; but the Registrar required a statement from the Coroner before registering the deaths, and wrote below the cause of death assigned the words, "Not certified," as he was required to do. This course did not prevent the deaths, but gave the Coroner the opportunity of exercising his functions if he thought necessary. He thought that under the circumstances it would not be wise to take any further steps in the matter.

WHEAT AND FLOUR DUTY.

Mr. O'REGAN asked the Premier, If it is true that the Government contemplate increasing the import duties on wheat and flour? Is the Government aware that the largest mill in the colony is owned, at Auckland, by the Globo Assets Company, and that this company and kindred institutions would be the sole gainers by any further increase of duties? He had noticed a report going through the newspapers to the effect that the Government intended to increase the import duty on wheat and flour. Of course, it did not follow because the statement appeared in the newspapers that it was true, but there was a great deal of correspondence in regard to the question, showing that there was a certain amount of uneasiness, and in order to set the matter at rest he would like to have an answer from the Government. With regard to the Globo Assets Company, he was informed that there was no such company at present, that company having become merged into the Estates Company. That, however, would not affect the point of the question.

Mr. WARD said the position was not as the

honourable gentleman stated. From information the Government had received it was stated that in one district of the colony there were 150,000 sacks of wheat held on account of farmers. Government were making inquiries as to whether the proposed alteration would benefit the producers or the speculators; if it was going to benefit the speculators, of course nothing would be done. No hasty decision would be arrived at, and the matter would be carefully considered in all its bearings. The Government had not decided anything.

FEILDING AND HUNTERVILLE POST-OFFICES.

Mr. STEVENS asked the Postmaster-General, Whether the Government will give effect to the wishes of the inhabitants of Feilding and Hunterville by erecting post-offices in each of those townships within some reasonable time? He wished to draw the attention of the Minister to the fact that these places were badly provided with postal accommodation. Feilding was a very thriving and important township, and deserved consideration from the Government in the matter of having a proper post- and telegraph-office. With regard to Hunterville, it was very inconvenient for the inhabitants of that township to travel a mile from the centre of the township to the railway-station to post their letters. He hoped the Government would be able to remedy the existing evil.

Mr. WARD said the matter had been very carefully gone into, and it seemed to him that a new post-office at Hunterville was required. Efforts had been made to obtain a site in a more central position, as it had been represented that the railway-station was not a suitable place. The attempt to obtain a site in a more central position had been, so far, unsuccessful. A petition favourable to the post-office being at the railway-station had been received, and also one against it, and the department was not in a position to decide between the two parties. He was himself of opinion that it should be in a more central position, if a suitable site could be obtained. With regard to Feilding, it was not the intention of the Government to erect a new post-office there.

COLONEL FOX.

Mr. O'REGAN asked the Minister of Defence, If it is true that Colonel Fox has been appointed Military Adviser to the Government at a salary of £700 per annum; what is the reason of the appointment; and does the Government think such expenditure warranted? This was another newspaper report, which he would like set at rest by an answer from the Minister.

Mr. SEDDON said an offer had been made to engage Colonel Fox as Military Adviser to the Government, but not at the salary stated in the question. No reply had yet been received, but when it was received he would place the correspondence on the table of the House.

VAILE RAILWAY SYSTEM.

3.0. Mr. PIRANI, in moving the motion standing in his name, said he did not think it was necessary to enter into an elaborate speech with reference to this matter, but, at the same time, it was advisable that he should make some reference to it. He might say that the motion had been made under advice given to Parliament in past years by the present Premier, who had said that after the expiration of the present Railways Act would be a suitable time to propose such a trial as was mentioned in the motion. Many honourable members would recollect that in 1888 a proposal was made to the Government by a number of leading citizens of Auckland to lease the Auckland line for a term of five years for the purpose of trying this system thereon. They offered to give a guarantee that the line should be kept in good order, that the amount paid should exceed the revenue hitherto obtained on that line, and that, if after the expiration of a year the Government considered it advisable that the line should revert to Government management, then they would hand it back, upon getting six months' notice, in good order and condition. It seemed to him a pity that that very liberal offer was not accepted and the trial of this apparently excellent system made at the expense of private citizens. But that offer was not accepted, and therefore the only way to deal with the matter now was for the Government itself to arrange for a trial of that system upon our railways. Anybody who knew anything about the management of our railways and the tariff system in force thereon could not but admit that some improvement was necessary. At the present time the tariff in force on the railways covered no less than seventy-seven foolscap pages of close printing, and he defied almost anybody to understand the rates levied thereon. Besides that, the lines were not managed at all on a business system, because they knew that in the case of Oamaru, at any rate, there was an attempt made there to do simply nothing else but injure the harbour of Oamaru, and differential rates were actually charged upon goods received by steamer and ship at Oamaru, as opposed to goods received in other ways. That was only one slight instance of the many anomalies in the tariff of our railways; and he thought it was time that an effort was made to simplify the tariff in the interest of the producers, and in the interest of the consumers. If that were done, and if a trial of this system were made, he felt sure that it would not only tend to the best interests of the railways, but that it would improve the condition of the population along the lines of railway. It would increase the actual settlement, and it would relieve a great deal of the congestion which at present existed in the large towns.

Motion made, and question proposed, "That it is desirable effect should be given to the report presented to the House in 1886—that a trial of the Vaile system should be made on some section of our railways, under the direct supervision of Mr. Samuel Vaile."—(Mr. Pirani.)

Mr. SEDDON did not know whether the House was prepared to allow this motion to go by default; but there was a great deal more in it than honourable members seemed to think. He thought they should, at all events, be very careful in what they did in respect to this matter. There was no doubt Mr. Vaile had given a great deal of time and attention to railway matters, and he believed there was something in his contention; but it would be very difficult to select any section of our railways upon which the recommendations could be given effect to, and, to do that fairly, Mr. Vaile, he thought, stipulated that he himself should superintend and work the particular section of railway, the management of which would have to be handed over to him for that purpose. As the law stood, that would be impossible. The railways were vested in the Railways Commissioners. That being the case, what was the use of passing a resolution recommending that effect be given to the report of a Committee, when the law itself was dead against effect being given thereto? The proper course to adopt would be to alter the law. They would soon have before them the Railway Bill. When that Bill was before the House, then any honourable members could, if they thought it desirable in the public interests, move a clause under which effect could be given to the report—that was the proper time and place in which to give effect to their wish. The Railway Committee this session had reported that, as far as passenger-traffic was concerned, something must be done; but Mr. Vaile objected entirely to that.

Hon. MEMBERS.—No; the other way.

Mr. SEDDON said Yes, that was so; the recommendation of the Committee was in reference to the carriage of produce—particular produce of a perishable nature. That was the position; and it was that, of course, which Mr. Vaile objected to *in toto*. Knowing the country as he did know it—perhaps as well as, if not better than, Mr. Vaile himself—he questioned very much whether Mr. Vaile's proposition, if it were tried, would be satisfactory. He desired the House not to treat this matter with the indifference with which it seemed to be treating it in allowing the motion to go almost undiscussed. As the law stood it would be impossible to give effect to the resolution. The proper time to deal with the question was as he had suggested. For his part he would oppose the resolution, and ask the House to negative it.

Major STEWARD said, although he sympathized a good deal with the resolution which had been moved by his honourable friend, he could not but recognise that there was a great deal of force in what the Premier had said. Mr. Vaile had taken a special interest in the matter of railway management for a considerable number of years past. There was no member of that House who had not received pamphlet after pamphlet containing the arguments of Mr. Vaile, the reports of Committees, and the replies of the Railway Commissioners. In advocating that this scheme should be given a trial—if only he could show in what way

they could conveniently do so—he thought the honourable gentleman would be entitled to the support of the House; but, as the Minister had pointed out, it was not easy to show how that was to be done. As to the theory of Mr. Vaile, it was simply this: that three half-crowns were better than one five-shilling piece—a very simple proposition: in other words, if by reducing the rate of fares you could increase the amount of traffic in the proportion of three to one, then you would achieve a very considerable advantage. It had been argued for years past that that would be the effect of the stage-system with its consequent reduction of passenger fares. Since Mr. Vaile had brought the scheme forward a very similar scheme—though not entirely identical—had been brought into operation on some of the Hungarian railways, and the result, so far, had absolutely falsified the predictions of those opposed to the change, and they had entirely proved the position Mr. Vaile had taken up. And supposing the conditions were similar, similar results would follow here.

An Hon. MEMBER.—Are the conditions similar?

Major STEWARD said that was the real difficulty: Were the conditions similar? He was not prepared to say they were identical; but he was prepared to say this: that if the population of New Zealand utilised the railways and travelled by rail as frequently, man for man, as they travelled in other countries, then Mr. Vaile's calculations would be thoroughly reliable. Our people were just as disposed to spend their money in travelling by rail to attend race-meetings and any other thing that was going on as the population of other countries, and therefore he thought they would take advantage of cheap fares as fully as was done elsewhere. There was some evidence of that in the fact that whenever these cheap trips had been established on particular occasions, they paid the railways extremely well. The Minister made a curious mistake—which he (Major Steward) and others pointed out at the moment—in saying that the Railway Committee had recommended that Mr. Vaile's scheme should be applied to passenger-traffic only; whereas the Committee recommended precisely the reverse. The Minister afterwards corrected his statement, but the whole of his argument failed because he had stated it incorrectly. The whole point was this: Was it or was it not probable, in the face of what had happened in another country which had tried a similar experiment, that a large reduction in the rate of fares—that was, by introducing the stage-system—would have the effect of largely increasing the passenger-traffic? It did appear probable, judging by what had occurred elsewhere. He was bound to say, although he had read all the replies of the Railway Commissioners, and all the papers and pamphlets which Mr. Vaile had issued, that he did not think the Commissioners had disproved Mr. Vaile's contention, and that Mr. Vaile's case, argumentatively, stood entirely unchallenged. Then, there was the practical issue, whether

they should try the experiment. Undoubtedly, if they were to apply an experiment of this kind to the whole railway system of New Zealand, and if it did happen that Mr. Vaile's calculations were unfounded,—if the circumstances in New Zealand did not justify those calculations,—they might have to face a very considerable loss, which the Colonial Treasurer would not like to contemplate. But the question remained, Was it possible to give the thing a trial upon any one portion of the railways of New Zealand so that they might see how it would work here? That was a matter to which he thought the Railway Commissioners had not given sufficient consideration. Although his honourable friend who had moved the motion had not spoken to him about it, yet he thought it right to say a few words, but he would like to add that he considered, under the circumstances, the honourable member would be wise in accepting the advice of the Premier, and to presently agree to an adjournment of the debate, with a view to carefully considering whether he could not move a clause in the new Railways Bill which would enable a trial of this system, simply in relation to passenger-traffic, to be made upon some particular section of the railways. He thought, if that could be done, then they could not possibly lose more than a few thousand pounds, whereas if they tried it upon a more extensive scale, and it did not prove a success, they might lose a great many thousand pounds. That, it seemed to him, would be the wiser course. He would like very much to see the experiment have a trial, though, at the same time, he did not think he should be able to vote for the honourable member's resolution exactly as it was framed, lest the House should risk too much on the hazard of the die. He, however, ventured to say there was a good deal more in the arguments of Mr. Vaile than some honourable members seemed inclined to admit. The only difficulty in the way was, How were they to give his scheme a practical trial without subjecting themselves to too large a risk?

Mr. BUTTON said, referring to the objection made by the Premier to this motion—namely, that it was contrary to the present state of the law regulating the railways—he would say that he apprehended the very object of bringing down the resolution was to enable the Premier and his colleagues, if it were passed, to prepare some measure that would give effect to it. He regarded it as being the duty of the Government for the time being to do what they could to give effect to the resolutions of the House. The difference between the course suggested by the Premier and that which the honourable gentleman who had introduced the motion was pursuing was simply this: that, if they were to wait until the Bill came down before the clause was introduced, then the honourable gentleman who had moved the motion would have the onus of introducing that clause, and would have all the trouble of seeing that it was properly prepared, and that arrangements were made for giving effect to the motion. On the other hand, if

the resolution were carried by the House, the Premier and his associates in the Government would see that it was their duty, and feel it to be their duty, to give effect to the resolution by preparing such a clause in the Bill as would meet the case. The Premier would be in a far better position to deal with the matter than the honourable gentleman who had introduced the motion, because he would know on which section of the New Zealand railways this trial could be best made, and he would be able to arrange details accordingly. He would therefore ask the House to pass the resolution, and, if it were passed, no doubt the Premier would do what he could to give effect to it by himself proposing such an alteration in the Railways Bill as would be necessary to meet the case.

Captain RUSSELL could not agree with the honourable gentleman who had last spoken, that it was desirable the House should pass the resolution which had been introduced by the honourable member for Palmerston. The Premier, in commencing just now, seemed to think that the House was going to allow this question to go by default; but there he was completely wrong. The House naturally waited for the Minister for Public Works to give a lead upon the subject of a question of policy so broad as a change in the management of the railways. Surely it was the duty of the Government, and particularly of the Minister for Public Works, to tell them what the Government thought on a subject on which they necessarily could not be so well informed as the Ministers themselves. He was quite convinced that his honourable friend the member for Palmerston, when he worded this resolution, was either a little incautious, or did not realise the autocracy of the Premier. By the Railways Bill which they would have to discuss a few days hence the railways were vested entirely in the hands of the Minister for Public Works.

Mr. SEDDON.—Oh, no.

Captain RUSSELL said that was how he understood the Bill. The power was taken away completely out of the hands of the Commissioners, and was vested in the hands of the Minister for Public Works. Well, during all the years he had had the honour of knowing the Premier he had never known him to submit himself to any person, and he did not think it likely that they would have a Vaile over-riding Seddon. He thought that idea was too ludicrous altogether. It could not be seriously contemplated.

Hon. MEMBERS.—Rather a light weight.

Captain RUSSELL.—It might be rather a light weight, and the Premier might be able to carry a much heavier weight, but there would be no intention on the part of the Premier to allow any person, however great an adept he might be, to control the railways, so long as he had any voice in the matter. The honourable member for Waitaki had told them that the principle of Vaile's system was that it was better to get three half-crowns than one crown. Probably that might be so. It would ordinarily be better to get three half-crowns than one crown; but then came the ques-

tion, How if it cost 8s. to earn the three half-crowns, but only 4s. to earn the 5s.? There was the whole position. So far as he understood the question, there was in reality no analogy whatever between the railway systems of New Zealand and Hungary. In Hungary they had one of the poorest countries in Europe with a dense population, but here they had a country comparatively rich but with a scant population. He believed that the whole success of the Vaile or zone system depended upon its being given effect to where there existed a dense population, and so poor that they would not travel unless they were compelled to do so. Then came the analogy which the honourable member desired to draw between the Vaile system and the cheap fares on excursion trains; but that was really based upon nothing. Persons would go on an excursion, no matter what it cost them, on public holidays, but, having once done so, if offered a free ticket to make the same journey the next day they would decline to do so. Such, at any rate, was the result of what had come under his observation. On the opening of a railway they would find numbers on the train—the train so crowded that they could not find standing-room—but before the excursion train had returned to the station from which it started one-half of the passengers wished themselves home, and would willingly pay double the fare if they could only be discharged at their homes two or three hours earlier. The people of this country travelled only when they were obliged to, and would not travel, however cheap they might make the fares, unless they had business to do, for the people here were a busy people. Then, it was a fact that the zone system in Hungary was still in an experimental stage, and rumour said—and they knew nothing but rumour about it—that it did cost 8s. to earn the three half-crowns. It might be said that that was immaterial. He had had the pleasure of reading a pamphlet by the honourable member for Riccarton, had read it with a great deal of pleasure, and had got a good deal of information from it; and he gathered from it that the zone system depended for its success upon placing population in the remoter parts of the colony. Assuming that to be the case—and it would be absolutely necessary for the success of Vaile's system that such should be the case—then no one could suppose, as the honourable member for Waitaki seemed to think, that this experiment could be carried on on one section of railway for a small amount. It would mean not one, two, three, or four years, but it would require at least five years to thoroughly test the Vaile system, inasmuch as it was all based upon an extension of population, and on spreading the community into districts where population was now scarce. Therefore it would not do to imagine that the question could be decided on one line of railway in a short time. The whole success of the scheme must depend upon the introduction of population into districts where they were not at present, and probably very few persons who were supporting Vaile's system would argue

Mr. Button

otherwise than that, whatever the ultimate effect might be, the immediate effect of adopting Vaile's system would be a loss of revenue. Well, would any honourable member say that they were now able to submit to a loss of revenue which they could possibly avoid? Most certainly they could not. Nor did he believe that even if they made the reduction in the charges they would get people to travel very much more than they did at present. Travel where they would in New Zealand, they would find numbers of people travelling in first-class carriages who would not avail themselves of the comparatively cheap fares second-class. Now, in England they would find really well-to-do persons travelling in third-class carriages. They all knew the story of the noble duke who, when asked why he travelled third-class, replied, "Because there is no fourth." Here, he regretted to say, they found that people scorned petty economies. They had an illustration of this in the postal service: people preferred to pay twopenny for a mere gossiping letter to using a penny post-card. To the people of New Zealand the day had not come when they would consider petty economies, and until that day did come he, at any rate, did not believe that they would travel any more because they could get reduced rates or fares; and the same argument would apply to a great extent to the conveyance of goods. It was constantly said that the charge on goods ought to be such as to drive wagons and traction-engines out of competition. At first sight that seemed a reasonable proposition, but in reality it was more difficult than persons imagined, since the wagons and traction-engines had the advantage of leaving the actual line of rail. If goods had to be carried eight or ten miles to a railway, the dray returning empty, and the produce being carried on thirty or forty miles by railway, it might be cheaper to send them all the way by traction-engine. They might believe him when he said that it was much easier to dogmatize upon the necessity for reducing the fares than to deal with the facts, though he should be delighted if it were possible to give the system a trial. It was, of

3.30. course, almost a temptation to everybody to think that a scheme could be devised under which persons moving about for long distances could travel as cheaply as those who were living close to the point at which they began their journey and who did not travel far; but they must remember this: that their first duty at the present time was to keep up their revenue, and, although it might be said that there would be a considerable benefit to the whole colony by the reduction of fares, he would ask the House to bear in mind that for one person who would be benefited by this reduction of fares there were three or four who would not be able to take advantage of the railways at all; and, if there was any further reduction in the railway revenue—in other words, if they had to impose fresh taxation to make up for that reduction of revenue—it must inevitably come out of those persons' pockets who were not able to take advantage of

the railways at all. It did seem to him, however desirable it was to give the producers of the colony every benefit they possibly could, yet they had a right to remember those persons who could not, and for many years to come would not be able to, participate in the benefits arising from the public-works expenditure, and therefore their first duty was to safeguard the revenue, which he was quite sure could not be done if this motion were given effect to.

Mr. CROWTHER had been expecting that the Chairman of the Railway Committee would have got up after the last speaker, but he had waited until he thought the opportunity of rising himself would be lost. However, he might say that he had presented a number of petitions to the House this year on this question, and the only answer he could get to these petitions from the Railway Committee was that the matter set forth in the resolution of 1886 had been fully gone into, and that the Railway Committee had no reason to believe there were any other new circumstances that would seriously make any difference as between that time and this, and therefore they could not see their way to enter into such a thorough investigation as was conducted in 1886. Besides that, those who had seen the resolution of 1886 knew that there was a condition attached to that report which this resolution absolutely did not touch. He had no doubt the House would readily give effect to the conditions then made, if Mr. Vaile would accept them; but Mr. Vaile had got his scheme in his head according to his own notion, and it seemed that he was not prepared to accept amendments from any one in the slightest way as a deviation from that scheme. He (Mr. Crowther) made Mr. Vaile acquainted with the condition of things. He wrote him a letter, and Mr. Vaile had not even considered it worth his while to answer it. That seemed to him to indicate that he (Mr. Crowther) was, in Mr. Vaile's estimation, a very great sinner, and he took it that it was not owing to what he had done, but to what he had not done. He thought, if Mr. Vaile had been permitted according to the terms of his request to undergo another examination before the Committee, at the conclusion of that examination he would have found himself exactly where he landed in 1886: that was, that the present Government were not prepared to accept the responsibility of making this test. And seeing that the Premier had made a further statement that day that, at any rate, so long as the Railway Commissioners were in charge, there was no possibility of making the test other than through the Commissioners, he was quite sure that, if it would be very hard for the Premier to work in unison with Mr. Vaile in this matter, it would be quite as hard for the three Commissioners. Therefore he thought, whatever this discussion might have done that afternoon, they could arrive at no other decision on this motion than that suggested by the honourable member for Waitaki, to defer the matter until they knew what had been done in terms of the notice of motion given by the Premier, asking

what transformation the railway system was to undergo in the immediate future.

Mr. WARD thought there were very few people who would not say that a gentleman who had so consistently and persistently agitated for railway reform as Mr. Vaile had done did deserve, at some time or another, to be successful. He had, with wonderful persistency, kept up this agitation in favour of an alteration in the railway rate for many years, and one could not help admiring the plucky manner in which Mr. Vaile had continued his advocacy of a system which he believed to be an effective one. He (Mr. Ward) believed that Mr. Vaile—he was now speaking for himself—was on the right line. He did not say that that gentleman was not going too far in the direction he was advocating, but he did believe that some change in the system was desirable, and he also thought that the system which Mr. Vaile was advocating had a very great deal to recommend it; but he regretted that the time he proposed the adoption of this scheme seemed to him at present to be inopportune. It was not a time when any experiment or trial should be given effect to, so far as the railway revenue of the colony was concerned. That being so, he would suggest to the honourable gentleman that he should add to his resolution the condition which was embodied in the report of the Committee of 1886: that if this experiment were tried, then the districts through which the line passed upon which the experiment was made should be called upon, if necessary, to provide any loss of revenue owing to that change in the system. If that were done, he thought the resolution would be unanimously adopted, in order that the proposed system should have a trial. But he assured the honourable gentleman that it was not a time for the Government of this colony to accept a proposal which might result—he did not say it would—in loss of revenue. Much as he should like to see the Vaile system tried—and he should really like to see it—he regretted exceedingly that, so far as he was concerned, he should have to oppose the resolution as it stood at present. He presumed that the honourable gentleman had seen the clause attached to the report to which he referred.

Mr. PIRANI.—I have seen it.

Mr. WARD said that, if the honourable gentleman could include that clause in his motion, he for one would support it.

Mr. G. W. RUSSELL regretted that, having arrived from the South only a few hours before, he was not aware this subject was coming up, or he would have prepared himself to discuss it somewhat more fully, especially as he occupied the position of Chairman of the Railways Committee. He would like to point out to the honourable member who moved the resolution that the motion he had put before the House assumed one or two things which were not quite correct. The honourable gentleman asked the House to say "That it is desirable effect should be given to the report presented to the House in 1886—that a trial of the 'Vaile' system should be made on some section of our

railways under the direct supervision of Mr. Samuel Vaile." Now, in regard to that motion, the Colonial Treasurer had drawn attention to the fact that a condition was attached to that report; and, so that honourable members might know exactly what that condition was, he would read three paragraphs from the report of the Committee of 1886, as follows:—

"For these reasons, while admitting that the evidence adduced in favour of Mr. Vaile's system has not been sufficient to prove that it would be a financial success, or to warrant its application to the railways of the colony as a whole, the Committee, bearing in mind the great importance of the subject, is of opinion that a trial should be given to the system on an isolated section of our railways.

"It would, however, be unfair that one part of the colony should enjoy the advantage of cheap transit, thereby enhancing the value of property therein, at the expense of the general colonial revenue. Therefore the following proviso is necessary, and the Committee recommends the Government, by legislation, to give the local bodies the power of carrying it into effect where they so desire:—

"Provided that the various local bodies in the district served by the section of railways to which this scheme is to be applied shall have previously struck a rate sufficient, in the opinion of the Governor, to recoup any loss to the revenue which it may entail: such loss, if any, to be calculated on the basis of the revenue of that section for the past financial year, with the average increase or decrease of general revenue of the New Zealand railways either added or deducted."

Now, that was the condition upon which the Committee in 1886 recommended that this system of railway management should have a trial. But it was also certain that the Committee did not recommend that that trial should be made under the direct supervision of Mr. Samuel Vaile, because, he ventured to say, it would be an almost unheard-of thing that the whole management of a large section of railways should be handed over to a gentleman who had only studied railway matters theoretically, and who, presumably, knew nothing about railways from a practical administrative point of view. This had an important bearing upon the whole question; and the fact that Mr. Vaile had asked for this for a number of years past had made him hesitate very much as to what he should do in the way of supporting any proposal that Mr. Vaile might make; because he would not be prepared, however much he might agree with the general principles, to say that any part of the railways should be handed over to a gentleman who knew nothing of the practical management of railways, and who laid down as one condition that he must have the whole management of the line on which his system was to be tried. Mr. Vaile had repeatedly said that he would not trust the railway department with the trial of his system, because he believed the officers would try to kill it. While on his feet he would like to say that,

Mr. Crowther

so far as the general principles were concerned, Mr. Vaile was undoubtedly moving in the right direction. The tendency of the railways of the world had been to mass population around the centres, to draw in the rural population, to build up large cities, and to depopulate the country districts; and he ventured to say that any system of management which would have the effect of spreading population over the country would be beneficial to the country in the end. He thought that was the object which Mr. Vaile aimed at; but he (Mr. G. W. Russell) would like to point out that Mr. Vaile had never seriously proposed in detail to apply his system to goods-traffic, and honourable gentlemen who had studied the railway question would see that it was railway management as applied to the great productions of the country they had to look at, rather than as applied to passenger-traffic. Mr. Vaile's answer would be that he could make such a measure of profit out of the passenger-traffic as to be able safely to considerably reduce the goods freights. But that must be, to a very large extent, theoretical. That phase of the question was one which had never been satisfactorily demonstrated. Mr. Vaile had always failed to deal with that aspect of the question. Had he applied his system to the heavy productions of the colony—such as coal, potatoes, wheat, and other produce of that kind—he (Mr. G. W. Russell) thought that gentleman's proposals would have had throughout the colony a great deal more support than they had received up to the present time. Now, he would also like to point out this fact: that even in the Province of Auckland the interest in connection with Mr. Vaile's proposal had during the last few years very greatly subsided. He thought he was correct in saying that at the recent election Mr. Vaile stood as a candidate, and the position he occupied in his own city at the election did not justify the statement that the people of Auckland held as strong an opinion in favour of his principles and proposals as they did a few years ago. That, he thought, was a very important factor in the case, and one they should look at in a practical way. The Government proposal in the Financial Statement—to reduce the goods charges for long distances—was the direction in which the colony should move, and he thought the railway fares might very well be left to settle themselves, except that for long distances there should be some reduction,—he would go so far as to say some considerable reduction,—in order that those who were not employed, and those in poor circumstances, might have an opportunity of travelling about the country to a greater extent than they had at present. Honourable members must have noticed how comparatively little the railways were used by the working-classes of the colony. There was a large stratum of our population who were positively unable to use the railways as a means of locomotion owing to the heavy charges. Take the case of a man who thought he might be able to find work some fifty or a hundred

miles distant. The fare he had to pay in order to look for that work was almost prohibitive, and men of this sort frequently stayed at their homes, and did not look for work in the country, because of the heavy handicap that the railway-fare imposed upon them. He thought if the Government, in the event of their resuming control of the railways, or the Commissioners, if the railways remained in their hands, would go into the question of how far it might be possible to reduce the fares for long distances, a large number of persons might be encouraged to use the railways who did not now use them at all, except when compelled to do so by the exigencies of business, and that there would be a considerable increase of the revenue in that way. The experience they had had of long-distance excursions, such as the excursions that were run by railway from time to time between Christchurch and Dunedin, and over long distances on the North Island lines, showed that when they reduced the railway-fares the trains were almost always crowded. The experience they had of penny newspapers, cheap telegrams, and penny postage all went to show that Mr. Vaile's principle would work in the right direction. The chief point was the cheapening of the cost of railway travelling so as to increase the number of persons who used the railways. That being so, he thought that, whilst this resolution asked that Mr. Vaile's system should be tried without any financial safeguard attached to it, and under his own direct supervision—he could not support that, although he sympathized with the object. He would not support any proposal made in the House that part of our system of railways should be handed over to Mr. Vaile for him to administer as he thought fit: he thought it was an unsound proposal to make. At the same time he would support any proposal that went in the direction of cheapening the freight for goods and the passenger-fares, particularly any proposal that went to cheapen freights on the productions of the colony.

Mr. EARNSHAW did not propose to take up much time in speaking on this question, as he agreed with the remark the Premier had made—namely, that the proper time for discussing how they should conduct the railways in the future was when the Railways Bill was before the House. There was no doubt about it that until they settled first whether they were going to continue the system of having Commissioners to conduct our railways, who would have absolute powers, or whether they were going to revert to a system of railway management and administration directly under Ministerial control—until that question was solved the time was inopportune to discuss the question whether they should test Mr. Vaile's system of railway management or not. Personally, he was very strongly in favour, if a trial was to be made, of it not being made on any particular section, but that the whole of the trunk railways should be worked under Vaile's system. He was of opinion that Mr. Vaile was too sanguine altogether, from his figures; and also that, as the honourable mem-

ber for Riccarton had clearly pointed out, he altogether failed to realise what was needed, which was the cheapening of the freights for goods as well as the fares for passengers. He thought that the Minister was right in asking that this debate should really take place on the consideration, or after the consideration, of the Railways Bill.

Mr. REEVES only rose to make one remark, because a great deal of what he thought to have said had been said already, and very forcibly, by the honourable member for Riccarton, and he did not propose to repeat that. But there was one point he wished to touch upon, and that was contained in a remark made by the honourable member for Hawke's Bay about the scorn with which the people of this colony treated petty economies. The honourable gentleman instanced the fact of people persisting in travelling first class, whereas they would save a good deal of cash if they travelled second class instead; and in England, the honourable gentleman said, they found the same class of people willingly travelling second class and even third class. There was no doubt that in England, however, people travelled very much offener by rail than they did in this colony, and that the saving represented by the difference between the first- and second-class fares, or between the second- and third-class fares, was a very serious amount of expenditure, or would be over any long period. Here, with few exceptions, the people did not travel a great deal on the railways, and consequently, perhaps, not having frequently to put their hands into their pockets, did not to such an extent avail themselves of the reduced charge afforded by the second-class fares. There was another question, and the honourable member for Riccarton had put his finger on the blot,—namely, that there was not a sufficient difference between the first- and second-class fares to make the people really anxious to travel second class instead of first class, and in order to induce the poorer people to travel second class there must be some adequate reason for their doing so. The way to get people to travel second class instead of first class was by reducing the second-class fares to something lower than they were now. Then, he had no doubt, some of those who now always travelled first class would go second class; and, although they might lose money there, he thought it was highly probable that a large section of the working-classes who travelled seldom now would travel very much offener, and to that extent he thought Mr. Vaile was proceeding on right lines. As for the rest, he agreed with other speakers that it was quite a different question to hand over the railways to Mr. Vaile or any other enthusiastic theorist to use as he pleased. If a trial were to be made it should be accompanied with some guarantee that he was prepared to recoup some of the possible loss which might accrue. With these limitations, he was prepared to support the proposal, but not without these limitations.

Mr. LAWRY said that for once he entirely

Mr. Earnshaw

agreed with the remarks that had fallen from the honourable member for Hawke's Bay. If his utterances always went in the same direction that they had gone that afternoon he would always get his (Mr. Lawry's) support. It seemed to him that in dealing with this matter of the railways they lost sight of one great fact, which was indicated by the speech of the honourable member for Hawke's Bay, but was not demonstrated to such an extent as he thought it merited—namely, that if they induced the people to travel when they had no business in view they inflicted a positive injury upon them. Take the whole of the settlers in the Waikato District, in the Waipa, or in any of the intervening districts between Auckland and the Waikato, and what would they say? They would say, "If you induce us to leave our farms and travel into Auckland, we not only lose two or three days' valuable time, but we are led into spending perhaps £3 or £4 that we cannot afford to spend; and, consequently, if you go in for Vaile's system, and induce us to leave our farms when there is no use in doing so, instead of conferring a benefit upon us you are imposing a positive injury upon us." He thought that any one who knew the country settlers, and what they did, would indorse this view of the question. Various speakers had referred to the question of cheap trains. The leader of the Opposition had said that in many of the railway excursion-trains many of the people who experienced the discomfort of being crowded together as they were on such occasions would be willing, before the excursion was over, to pay double the amount charged them to be relieved from the annoyance that this pressure entailed upon them. He (Mr. Lawry) remembered once attending a meeting of Mr. Vaile's at Ohaupo, in the Waikato, when Mr. Vaile advanced the same sort of fallacious arguments in favour of his system, and when he was met by the then member for Waipa (Mr. Lake) with this argument: Mr. Lake said, "I have a railway-pass in my pocket which enables me to go every day of the week to Auckland for nothing, if I choose. Do I go? I do not go, simply because I have no business there. My business keeps me at home, and if I were to leave my business simply because I can go from Waikato to Auckland for nothing I should very likely be put to a loss of £2 or £3 in expenses, and I should perhaps lose another £10 through neglecting my farm." That argument applied with equal force to every settler throughout the length and breadth of New Zealand. He remembered, too, that at that meeting Mr. Vaile advanced another argument in support of his contention—namely, that when the trains were started to run, at practically his own rates, from Hawke's Bay through the Manawatu Gorge, every day the trains were crowded; but he (Mr. Lawry) had previously taken some pains to make inquiries into this particular case, and he found out that the people went to the Manawatu Gorge once, out of simple curiosity, and when they had gone once there they did not want to go again;

and had trains gone on running from Napier to the Manawatu Gorge the result would have been there would have been nobody for the trains to carry but the engineer and the guards and firemen. The honourable member for Riccarton struck another very important keynote in connection with this question, and that was this: Mr. Vaile had never applied his system to a much greater question—the matter of freight-traffic—that was, the question of carrying settlers' goods to and from their homes. If they ever analysed this question they would find that under Mr. Vaile's system the bulk of the people who travelled would have to pay more even than they did now. Take the rates charged, say, within five miles of Auckland, and they would find that under the present tariff for season tickets it was very low; while under Mr. Vaile's tariff they would have to pay his minimum rate—namely, 4d.—he thought he was correct in saying it was 4d. People living at Ellerslie could travel now, by taking a season-ticket, to and from town for about 8d. return. Beyond that, if a man living there had business in town, and wanted to go home to Ellerslie for his mid-day lunch, he could travel back for nothing. Consequently, under the facilities afforded by the system of season-tickets, the people living in the suburbs, where most of the people lived, by using the trains saved nearly 50 per cent. on the present system. He knew very well that the honourable gentleman who moved this resolution was actuated by pure motives—by a desire to see some of the anomalies in the railway system wiped away, and in this respect he had the sympathy and would have the support of every honourable member in the House. But if the honourable member for Palmerston wanted to do any good in the matter of railway reform, let him join a number of honourable gentlemen in the House who were prepared to support him and compel the Government to do a great national work—that was, to buy the Manawatu Railway line. That was one of the great things in railway reform they had to face, and if they were united upon it the Government would be compelled to buy that line, in the interests of the nation.

Mr. W. KELLY.—Let Vaile try his system on that line.

Mr. LAWRY.—Yes; let him try his system on the Manawatu line. There was another great reform for which the honourable gentleman might move in the interests of that part of the country, and that was the completion of the line from the Wairarapa to connect with the Napier Section.

Mr. PIRANI.—They have got no money.

4.0. Mr. LAWRY.—Let them get the money. There was no difficulty in getting money to commence a great national work of this kind. The honourable member for Riccarton further said that the people of Auckland did not care for the Vaile system; and what he said was correct. There were a few sincere agitators who would attend a public meeting on this question, but if you were to

take a *plébiscite* of the whole population of Auckland City and country there would be an overwhelming majority against any trial of the Vaile system under his supervision. The honourable gentleman, in bringing the motion before the House, was not altogether honest, and did not reveal the whole case. Why had he told a half-truth? He (Mr. Lawry) did not think it was worth while to discuss the general principle of dealing with the railways on an abstract question of this kind. The honourable gentleman knew his resolution could not have any effect: if it were passed it must necessarily be on the conditions which were contained in the report of the Committee of 1886, conditions which Mr. Vaile had absolutely refused to accept on every occasion. Whilst he was prepared to support any member in the House, or the Government, in an endeavour to bring about railway reform to wipe away the anomalies that existed in the system, he was not prepared to hand over an important section of railway in any part of the colony to the management of Mr. Vaile. And here was another phase of the question. Taking the Auckland Section, would it be right to other parts of the colony, dealing with the thing from a national point of view, to give Auckland an advantage for which those in the South would have to pay? The thing was as Utopian as anything could be. It was a very good line for the honourable member for Palmerston to go upon—to attempt to make political capital out of an abstract question of this nature. He (Mr. Lawry) had no doubt the question would crop up when the Railways Bill was before the House, and in the meantime it was very unwise to go into the general principle of management in dealing with an abstract question.

Mr. MILLS looked upon the question somewhat differently from others who had spoken. Some honourable members seemed to treat it with levity. He thought Mr. Vaile had shown, at any rate, a great deal of perseverance in bringing his scheme before the public year after year; and he would like to be informed, who paid the piper? He was very suspicious of any one bringing forward any new proposition that other people had to pay for; but if Mr. Vaile found the money himself to publish all the leaflets he sent broadcast through the colony, he should consider there was some earnestness of purpose about that gentleman. He never had the pleasure of meeting him, but would much like to do so. He was not going to tell the House that he believed altogether in his policy, or would vote for this motion; but, still, he did think there were a great many oats among the chaff in the proposition he had made, and he would like to see something in the way of a trial given to a man who had proved his consistency year after year in this matter, whether he was right or wrong. The matter could be better discussed when the Railway Bill came before Parliament: but if one thing had made him think in the way he did more than another it had been that he had long since thought the railways were not run in the interests of

further settlement throughout the country. The Commissioners were bound by Act of Parliament to show a good result for their work, and this had been their main point. Pounds, shillings, and pence were no doubt a great factor in every country: at the same time, he thought the settlers in the outlying districts deserved far more consideration than they got through our railway-communication, and he would like to see the benefits of the system extended to those men who were going away hundreds of miles inland and endeavouring to found new homes for themselves and their families. He had always considered the railways in the colony should be looked upon as a higher class of roads, and he contended that a man who had to travel for two or three days to a market lost quite enough in the time taken up by travelling alone; and that, so far as the railway-fare, or the freight on produce was concerned, it should be reduced as low as possible, so as to encourage those who went further back than the ordinary run of settlement, for they should get every possible encouragement. There had been something like sixteen millions of public money expended. Whose was this money? Who found it? The people of the colony: each one contributed *pro rata* a certain amount of the interest on the capital; and because one lived within ten miles of a network of railways, such as at Christchurch or Dunedin, why should he receive the great benefits he did in comparison with a man who went back in the country, and was, at any rate, doing a great deal towards furthering settlement? He contended that, if such arguments as were used by the honourable member for Parnell were correct, it would be monstrous. It was absurd, because he told them, in the first instance, that if there were cheap fares every one would want to go to town at once, and this, of course, would be a loss to them and to the country; but immediately afterwards he said that a man who had a free pass would not go at all. It was quite clear, to his (Mr. Mills's) mind, that no settler would be so foolish as to leave his home and work for no other reason than that he could travel at a very small cost on the railways. In any matter that came before the House with regard to railway matters he would be found always to give the first consideration to those who resided furthest away from the great cities. This was a cardinal point for all to study: to give to those people who were giving what he considered the main benefits to the country every privilege it was possible to afford them without direct loss to the State. If this money that had been expended on railways had been provided by a small syndicate out of their own private pockets the question would be looked at from a different point of view. But, when the money taken for the interest to be paid on the principal had to be found by the whole of them collectively, then they must face the matter from a very different standpoint; and therefore anything in the direction of according better facilities and cheaper road-riding for those residing far away would meet

Mr. Mills

with his approval: and he thought those who lived near the towns could afford to pay more and let the farmers in the country derive the benefit.

Mr. E. M. SMITH was surprised beyond measure at the honourable member for Parnell speaking in the way he had. They had this question of the Vaile system before last Parliament. He remembered when thirty-two members waited upon Mr. Ballance and went very fully into the question. He was one of those who believed that a fair, honest, and impartial trial should be given to Vaile's system of management. He believed that if a trial were given to it it would prove a grand success, commercially and otherwise. The Commissioners had no object but to show as big a balance-sheet as possible—to show a large profit at the end of the year, regardless of whether they suited the convenience of the country or not. He himself had pointed out again and again that the national railways should be used to national purposes, and should assist in the development and establishment of settlement all along the line. If he were only one of the Commissioners for twelve months he would revolutionise the whole state of affairs. He had pointed out to them over and over again how they might help the making of roads. In some places there was no metal, in other places there was any amount of gravel; and, if it were conveyed to the roads, what would be the result? We should get good roads for miles on each side of the railways. In some of the districts he had the honour to represent it was costing £600 a mile to metal the roads. How could they do this? It was an impossibility. He knew of roads in the Stratford district that were knee-deep in mud for three or four years; and yet within a few miles there was an unlimited supply of the best road-gravel; and yet no arrangement could be come to to convey it over a railway running only about two trains a day! That was not common-sense management. The first thing the country should do was to take over the Manawatu line. It would be in the interests of the whole colony, and then you could go in for this great reform, and run the thing right through. It would pay to try it for twelve months. Before the electric light or the telegraph was tried, did they not have people talking in as ridiculous a way as the honourable member for Parnell? He was sure they did. How often had he brought it before the Railway Commissioners, and the Government, and before members of that House that they ought to do with our railways what was done in other countries! The great countries in Europe had their State railway-workshops, where they manufactured their own carriages, locomotives, and trucks, and where they made everything of the best quality, and had the best workmen. France, Germany, Austria, and Belgium would not think of going to another country for their railway material. He could sympathize with Mr. Vaile, for if what he (Mr. E. M. Smith) had suggested had been adopted he would have been making the whole of the plant for our rail-

ways out of New Zealand material, and 25 per cent. cheaper than it was costing the colony now. He would have been employing the young men of this country in making the railway material. If the House would pass a resolution summoning a railway expert from the Old Country, and would let him go along the railway-lines with him (Mr. E. M. Smith), he would show that gentleman the rotten condition of the bridges and culverts. If you went to New Plymouth you would see two engines shunting a little goods-train, and if you asked why they did not get a more powerful engine you would learn that the secret was that the bridges would not carry a more powerful engine. If they would allow him to make iron instead of wooden bridges they would get over that difficulty. But what was the use of talking? He was not backed up by the House, nor by the Government, nor by the Railway Commissioners; and the present unsatisfactory condition of things was allowed to continue. He had carefully read all the pamphlets issued by Mr. Vaile, and he could say that of all men in this colony Mr. Vaile deserved the support of the people of New Zealand. It would pay the colony to run the risk of the experiment even if it did mean a loss of £20,000 or £30,000. They would then know the ins and outs of this proposal. But they had the experience of other countries to go upon. This system had been tried, and had been found to be a very paying scheme. They were told that a scheme such as this required a great population to support it. They knew that. People coming to this country were frightened at our railway-fares the very moment they landed. When Mr. Courtenay, for instance, brought out a hundred and eighteen people the other day, and when these people found out the difference between the railway-fares here and in the Old Country it nearly made their hair stand on end. He could assure honourable members this was an important question, and it was a question which should not be decided by a resolution; it was a question which ought to be referred to an independent expert to investigate. But it appeared whenever the scheme was brought up the Government tried to devise the easiest way of getting rid of it, and members shuffled out of it by ridiculing it. There was the honourable member for Parnell, for instance. He had very great respect for that honourable gentleman, but he did not like to see him treating this great national question in the way he had done. If the honourable gentleman had not the practical knowledge, or the time, to consider the question, what he ought to do was to make one of a number to refer the question to one who was capable of dealing with it. Being in favour of this scheme—a scheme which he honestly and conscientiously believed in—he (Mr. E. M. Smith) felt called upon to make these remarks. They had forced a few reforms upon the Government, and our railways now wanted taking in hand. When they were dealing with the Railways Bill he hoped the necessity for this would be recognised, and that they would bring about some of the re-

forms he had indicated. With these few remarks, he would record his vote in favour of Mr. Vaile's system of railway management being tried on the railways in New Zealand.

Mr. PIRANI, in replying on the question, wanted to say a word to the honourable member for Parnell. That honourable gentleman had accused him, in bringing forward this scheme, of trying to make political capital out of it. He was not built that way; and he would tell the honourable gentleman this also: that he did not go into the country accusing the Government of making partisan appointments, and then come to that House as a Government Whip and be their most slavish follower. If that was not making political capital he did not know what was. He (Mr. Pirani) did not act in that manner, but that was the way in which the honourable gentleman had acted. In reference to this question, he was very sorry the Premier had treated it in the way he had done, and when he read an extract from the honourable gentleman's Public Works Statement of 1892 honourable members would be as much surprised as he was at what the Premier had stated that afternoon. In his Public Works Statement, in 1892, the honourable gentleman said,—

“The returns from the working of our railways do not show at all a satisfactory condition of affairs; and the representations of Mr. Samuel Vaile, of Auckland, as to the working of the zone system indicate that at no distant date—possibly on the expiry of the Commissioners' term of office—it might be as well that a trial of this system should be made on our railways.”

Now the time had arrived as indicated by the Premier, and honourable members saw that day, by his attitude, how much faith could be placed in the Statement the honourable member made in 1892. In bringing this matter forward he thought it could not be said that he was endeavouring to injure the Railways Bill which the Premier introduced. He knew quite well that if he proposed this motion as an amendment in the Railways Bill, it would be treated in exactly the same way as his amendment on the Land for Settlements Bill was treated. Although members of the Ministry were in favour of the proposal, the Minister in charge of the Bill used his influence to prevent the adoption of his amendment. Therefore it was impossible for a private member to make such an amendment in a Government measure. He had acted on the principle enunciated by the Premier only the other day, when he invited private members to bring forward these matters for the vote of the House, and after that the Government could take them up; but it appeared now that precept and practice did not always agree. The Premier stated that Mr. Vaile stipulated that he himself should select the section on which the system should be tried. He had read everything which had been published by Mr. Vaile, and he had never seen any such stipulation made, and he was sure Mr. Vaile himself would be the very last person to suggest it. The honourable gentle-

man also referred to the report of the Railways Committee—to that portion of the report in which they advised the adoption of cheap rates of freight on fruit—and said that was part of Mr. Vaile's system. It surprised him that the Chairman of that Committee should have put his hands to such a report, because if there was anything in opposition to Mr. Vaile's system it was the system of differential rating. Therefore to suggest that cheap rates for a particular product was part of Mr. Vaile's system was quite contrary to the fact. The Premier stated that, as the law stood, the motion could not be given effect to; but he knew it was proposed to alter the law, and therefore this was an opportune time at which to give effect to the resolution. The leader of the Opposition referred to the danger of trying these experiments; but the honourable member did not recollect, when he said that, the dangerous experiment which he and his Government tried in 1887, when they handed over our railways to a man who had not had a sixpennyworth of experience in connection with them. They handed over the railways to Mr. McKerrow, whose experience as Surveyor-General certainly did not seem to indicate that he was a railway manager. And in doing that the Government gave him the power of veto over two men of large experience in the management of railways. If such an experiment was justifiable, surely when it was suggested that a man who had for years made this railway question his chief study, who had in season and out of season advocated the system, and who had proved on paper, even to great experts, that the system was possible of success, it might be regarded as not altogether unreasonable. He thought to give this gentleman's system a trial was not at all such a dangerous experiment as handing over to the Surveyor-General the management of our sixteen million pounds' worth of railways. The honourable member for Auckland City (Mr. Crowther) seemed to be a bit hurt because Mr. Vaile had not answered the report of the Committee with reference to his scheme.

Mr. CROWTHER.—I did not say that.

Mr. PIRANI might say that the Chairman of the Committee had received a large quantity of correspondence in reference to that, and he had no doubt that at the next meeting of the Committee the honourable gentleman would be prepared to show that Mr. Vaile had answered it. The honourable member for Riccarton said that the whole management of the line was to be handed over to Mr. Vaile. There was no such suggestion in the resolution—it was simply that the experiment must be tried under the direct supervision of Mr. Vaile. He would like to know how the experiment could be tried in any other way than under his supervision. He was positive that if anybody tried the scheme without the supervision it would be shown to be a failure. Most members who had spoken agreed with the general principles of the scheme. If they agreed with those principles, they must desire to see those principles carried into effect at some future time. If they desired the general principles to be

Mr. Pirani

carried into effect at some future date, they surely could not vote against the resolution. The honourable member for Parnell alluded to the purchase of the Manawatu Company's line and the completion of the Eketahuna line. If there were any two things diametrically opposed to each other it was the proposal for purchase by Government of the Manawatu line, and at the same time to complete the Eketahuna line: in fact, it was believed that the reason for the delay in attempting to purchase the Manawatu line was that it was thought if the Eketahuna line were finished it would reduce the price of the Manawatu line—that therefore the Government had deferred the purchase. But there was also a local objection to the purchase of the Manawatu line, and he would not be representing the wishes of some of his constituents if he advocated any such thing. That railway was rated at present for local purposes, and that would be lost to local bodies if the Government took over the line. Although he had no doubt that through passengers and persons who had goods to send through would like to see the line purchased, it was not such a burning question in the district as his honourable friend seemed to assume. He was glad the question would go to a division that day, and he trusted the support given to the resolution would be even stronger than had been given to it in the past. Some of the most prominent members of the House had endeavoured to get a trial of a system on exactly the same lines as he suggested, and he trusted they would not go back on their faith, but would endeavour to bring this matter as prominently before the Government as it would be brought by carrying such a resolution as that which he now proposed.

The House divided.

AYES, 20.

Bell	Hall-Jones	O'Regan
Carncross	Hogg	Smith, E. M.
Crowther	Hutchison, G.	Smith, G. J.
Earnshaw	Kelly, W.	Steward.
Green	Lang	<i>Tellers.</i>
Guinness	McGowan	Harris
Hall	Morrison	Pirani.

NOES, 27.

Allen	McGuire	Russell, W. R.
Buick	McKenzie, J.	Saunders
Carnell	McKenzie, R.	Stevens
Carroll	McNab	Tanner
Collins	Meredith	Thompson
Duncan	Montgomery	Ward.
Flatman	Newman	<i>Tellers.</i>
Houston	Pinkerton	Lawry
Mackenzie, T.	Russell, G. W.	Mitchelson.
Maslin		

PAIRS.

For.	Against.
Button	Joyce
Graham	Buchanan
Kelly, J. W.	Parata
Wilson.	Reeves.

Majority against, 7.

Motion negatived.

LICENSING ELECTIONS.

4.30. On the motion of Mr. HALL, it was ordered, That a return be laid before this House showing the total cost of last licensing elections, and the cost in each electorate; and also giving the particulars of the manner in which the expenses have been met.

CONSOLIDATED FUND.

Mr. G. HUTCHISON, in moving the motion standing in his name, said this return was intended to give, at a glance, the transactions, month by month, of receipts and expenditure during the financial year. A return on these lines had been ordered in 1889, and, as far as he knew, this return could be compiled without much trouble or expense. The information must all be in the Treasury, and it was simply reducing to a tabulated form what was ready to hand. He hoped his honourable friend would not meet him with the statement that this return would cost a good deal to compile. That argument had been used in connection with a return he had moved for early in the session—the return now numbered B.-19. When that return appeared he had looked with some curiosity for the statement at the foot of it, to see what it cost, and found, “Cost of preparation, nil.” Consequently, the honourable gentleman must have been misinformed when he made his former statement that it would be expensive to prepare. Similarly, in this instance, he believed the cost of the return would be nil, or very little, as it merely meant the compiling of information already at hand. It would, if granted, be of interest to the people of the colony.

Motion made, and question proposed, “That a return be laid before this House showing, in respect of the last financial year, Cr. and Dr., month by month, the several transactions of the Consolidated Fund, distinguishing, on the side of revenue, the monthly receipts from—(1) Customs, (2) stamps, (3) land-tax, (4) income-tax, (5) beer duty, (6) railways, (7) registration and other fees, (8) marine, (9) miscellaneous, (10) territorial revenue, (11) sinking-fund increases, and (12) moneys raised in aid of revenue by Treasury bills; and distinguishing, on the side of expenditure, the monthly disbursements for—(1) Civil List, (2) sinking fund, (3) interest on the public debt, (4) interest on floating debt, (5) under special Acts, (6) the several departmental services, (7) services not provided for, and (8) unauthorised expenditure.”—(*Mr. G. Hutchison.*)

Mr. WARD said his honourable friend might propose with equal propriety that this information should be furnished week by week or day by day. What was the object of asking that these items should be particularised in this way? The object, apparently, was to endeavour to institute a system of accounts which he thought was a better system than the one they were now conducting in the Treasury. His honourable friend was evidently desirous of having placed on record what his view was as to the way in which these accounts should be

kept. He wanted a retrospective statement of these accounts, each of which appeared in the Financial Statement. What was to be gained by it? The honourable gentleman evidently was not satisfied with the present system. Well, he might suggest to his honourable friend that in the sweet by-and-by, when the honourable gentleman himself became Colonial Treasurer, he might, perhaps, think fit to establish—

Mr. BELL.—Do not be always referring to the Colonial Treasurer; give us something new.

Mr. WARD did not hear what the honourable gentleman said, but he always noticed that whenever a statement was made from the Ministerial benches it disturbed honourable members on that side of the House very much—at any rate, it disturbed some of them. Why, Ministers sat listening to those honourable members making statements which they did not understand themselves, and which nobody else could understand, and Ministers sat silent and allowed them to go on; but whenever any one on the Government side got up to talk on a matter of this sort as quietly and intelligently as he could those honourable members were disturbed at once. It certainly did not take much to disturb them. This was a repetition of what they had during the financial debate. It was a desire to extract from the Treasury a different system of accounts. Those honourable gentlemen were not satisfied with what the Government did in connection with the finance of the colony, and they never would be satisfied regarding it until they were themselves conducting the finances of the colony; and then some magnificent system of accounts which, probably, nobody could understand would be put before the people of the colony, and they would say that it was a better system than the present one. It was the easiest thing in the world to change a system of accounts, but it was by no means so easy to improve upon a system. Whenever they found they had not in the Financial Statement such a system as was now proposed, they tried to get at that piecemeal. If he knew that any good were going to be done or anything accomplished beyond gratifying the desire of his honourable friend he would not oppose this motion, but he failed to see what good was going to be done by it. Any honourable gentleman who turned to the tables of the Financial Statement would find every item covered here shown clearly and separately, and, if his honourable friends were not satisfied with that, he thought they ought to be. If any honourable member thought the position would be improved by the carrying of this motion, let him direct his attention to the series of tables attached to the Financial Statement, which embodied everything that was necessary for a proper understanding of the accounts of the colony. But that was not sufficient for some honourable members, who wanted this information to be given month by month, and who afterwards might press to have it given week by week and day by day. No mercantile firm or private individual would

do it. At present one month's revenue might be larger than the previous month's, and similarly one month's might be smaller, so that on the whole year's revenue the difference was made up. It was a very easy thing for honourable gentlemen on the opposite side of the House to declaim as they had done, and as some of their friends had done, in regard to the public accounts, but there was no justification for such declamation. No good would be got by the country having the information that was asked for in this return, and therefore he should oppose it.

Mr. G. HUTCHISON.—It will not do any harm.

Mr. WARD did not say it would do any harm, but if they changed the system they would not be able to put the matter any more plainly than at the present time. The Government had endeavoured to put the position of these accounts clearly before the public, but if they made them ever so much clearer—if that were possible—those honourable gentlemen would not be satisfied, but would ask for further information in order to draw the Government. The accounts were published quarterly in the *Gazette* in the ordinary way; and it was impossible for any Colonial Treasurer to alter these accounts in any way, or to make them to appear what they were not. No Treasurer, or member of the Government who occupied a responsible position, would allow himself to be placed in the position of being in the power of the executive officers. That was what was implied in the motion of the honourable gentleman. They had seen the honourable gentlemen opposite, or their friends in different parts of the colony, making statements to the effect that the surplus did not exist; but he would reply that no Treasurer could manufacture a surplus. But it was a proper matter for inquiry whether they could not change the whole system of accounts. It was impossible for anyone to "rig" these accounts, for that was the only term which could be applied. He would tell the House this: There had not been a single item that ought to be brought to debit that had not been brought to debit in the last annual accounts. Wherever there had been a shilling they could debit in order to place the accounts fairly before the country it was done. Still the honourable member was not satisfied, and wanted a retrospective return month by month, to enable him to make comparisons, as he said, in the general interest of the colony; but he would not be able to alter the figures in any way, and therefore, in his (Mr. Ward's) opinion, the honourable gentleman must be actuated by motives of an entirely different character. The Government were not to be put off by side-issues, in order to gratify the curious desire of any honourable member. The present Government would control their own departments and finances, as long as they had the confidence of the country, to the best of their ability, and they would oppose these critical returns being produced, merely at the instigation of honourable members, which did no earthly good whatever.

Mr. Ward

Therefore he was not prepared to agree to the motion.

Mr. T. MACKENZIE said it was very pleasant to hear the Colonial Treasurer, in his pleasant voice, running off on side-issues; and the honourable gentleman would almost lead one to believe that he was sincere when he stated that the public accounts were clear. The objection that he (Mr. Mackenzie) had to them was that honourable members could not get clear accounts from the Colonial Treasurer. The honourable gentleman perambulated the colony during the recess, making statements on the hustings regarding the national debt which were not correct. They ought to have in that House an opportunity of ascertaining clearly the position of these accounts. He had moved for a return asking for particulars as to the gross debt and the net debt, and that return had been opposed—why, he could not understand. The Colonial Treasurer had said that the question of opening a fresh system of accounts would be worthy of consideration. Honourable members on the Opposition side of the House were of opinion that a fresh system ought to be adopted, as the present system of keeping Government accounts was simply a means of deceiving the people of New Zealand, in order that they might not be able to ascertain what was the position of the accounts of the colony. They had seen the case: one member of the House putting forward a certain series of figures backed up by the figures of the Treasury Department, and the Colonial Treasurer himself afterwards giving another set of figures; both apparently correct, but irreconcilable one with the other. That indicated to the colony that some financial jugglery was going on in connection with the colonial accounts, and the present Government had been using every opportunity to prevent any change whatever.

Mr. WARD said the Government had separated the Treasury-bills accounts, and this had never been done before.

Mr. T. MACKENZIE said that might be; but, still, the position was made no clearer.

An Hon. MEMBER.—Why, they showed that the debt was reduced somewhere.

Mr. T. MACKENZIE might remark that in 1883 the then Treasurer said the debt was reduced; and if the House would insist upon getting a certain return it would show that, instead of there having been a decrease, there had been an actual increase in the debt of the colony of £332,000. The Colonial Treasurer, at Winton, had stated that there had been an increase in the debt during his period of office to the extent of half a million, but he had carefully omitted to state whether it was the gross or the net debt. Then, with regard to the surplus which the honourable gentleman stated was a real one, why was it necessary for him to call upon the farmers of the colony to pay £300,000 into the coffers of the Government four months before it was due? Yet he told them, and he asked the country to believe, that there was an actual and genuine surplus amounting to something

like £300,000. He thought they ought to have statements that were clear to the House and to the country. The honourable gentleman had also stated that no commercial man would ever think of taking out items of the class mentioned in the motion from time to time: but that was the very thing a business-man would do. The honourable gentleman himself was a business-man, and he ventured to say that he had abstracts taken out of every department in his large company every month and forwarded to him. Every business-man in the colony who knew anything at all about business had an abstract drawn up every month showing the comparative returns of his business.

Dr. NEWMAN thought the Colonial Treasurer would be doing a very great work if he instituted a change in the system of keeping the accounts. That system had grown up from time to time, and it was of the most cumbersome fashion; and, as a matter of fact, nine-tenths of the members never looked into the figures. He would say, further, that, in spite of the figures published in the Financial Statement in the appropriations, various items of revenue could not be found. He was not blaming the Colonial Treasurer, because he was only pursuing the old system; but there should be a change. Taking the motion he had moved the other day, as to the amount paid for advertising during the past year, no honourable member could tell how much had been spent—whether it was £1,000 or £10,000—and if he asked the honourable gentleman where he could find the particulars of what was spent he could not tell him. He wished to call the attention of the Colonial Treasurer to this fact: During the term of office of his predecessor the original securities held by various trust departments were stated inaccurately in every respect, and were totally different from the list of securities to which the honourable gentleman had signed his name with the names of the Sinking Fund Commissioners. There was a difference of many thousands of pounds. There was also a very large number of securities held by the Public Trust Office and the Government Insurance Department which were not down on the list at all; and there were other things of the same kind. He would suggest to the Colonial Treasurer that during the recess he should look over the Canadian system of keeping the accounts, which was clear and distinct. Some honourable members would remember that Sir Julius Vogel brought down his Financial Statement one year and informed the House that he had £800,000 to spend on public works, but within a week of making that statement he had to make a full contradiction, as he found that he had got only £80,000. That was a matter of history. The honourable gentleman's colleague had also stated in 1892 that the Government had only spent so many thousands on public works, whereas he had spent many thousands more. From statements like those they were asked to believe how the finances of the colony stood. Then, the list of the securities held on mortgage

had been omitted from the returns—no less than £298,000 being mortgages. From the loose fashion in which the accounts were kept it was quite impossible for any one to find out very large items of expenditure. In Sir Harry Atkinson's time everybody heard that the travelling-expenses of Ministers and Civil servants amounted to £50,000, and the whole of that £50,000 was scattered about, and there was no one single item that could be singled out by which any one could tell what the amount of the travelling-allowances was. If he (Dr. Newman) were to ask the Colonial Treasurer what the travelling-expenses of Civil servants amounted to he would not be able to state it. He had asked the Treasurer the cost of advertising, and he could not find it. They would never have any clear statement as to the finances until the system was changed.

5.0. He admitted that from time to time it had been bettered,—and the Opposition criticism had bettered it; but he maintained that until they got something like the Canadian system of clear accounts they could have no real idea of what the revenues of the country were. He hoped that the Colonial Treasurer, the next time when March came round, would publish the accounts in April, and not keep them in his pocket until he brought down his Financial Statement. That was keeping the public from a knowledge of the accounts which they should possess, and was in defiance of the Act. The Colonial Treasurer ought to publish at the earliest moment the actual expenditure and revenue, and it ought not to be kept until after Parliament met. The Colonial Treasurer did not even keep the accounts for private circulation, but they were telegraphed to London, and honourable members had to wait until the London *Times* came back in order to see what the finances of the colony were. He hoped the Colonial Treasurer would not only take the matter into consideration this session, but that next session he would come down with a complete alteration of the accounts on business lines. He did not see why the Government should object to this resolution. The accounts were already very largely in evidence in the various departments. There was every month a return in manuscript sent to the Public Works Minister of the expenditure and other items, and he saw no reason why these businesslike proceedings should have the opposition of the Ministry.

Mr. HOGG said there was no doubt this proposal to publish the accounts of the colony monthly was a very new and brilliant idea. It had emanated, in his opinion, from a hypercritical mind which would be prepared to go almost any length in the direction of financial absurdity. What he was astonished at was not that the Colonial Treasurer was asked to publish the accounts monthly, but that he was not invited to publish weekly accounts, or, going further still, daily accounts. He should not have been surprised if that had been the extent of the order which the honourable gentleman opposite would like to give to the Colonial Treasurer. It seemed to him (Mr.

Hogg) that honourable members opposite, in despair of being able to controvert the figures of the Colonial Treasurer, were beginning now to invent new ideas. Who ever heard of monthly accounts, as had been alleged by the honourable member for Wellington Suburbs, being given in this manner by any merchant or by any man of business? It was very true there were monthly abstracts in connection with many mercantile businesses; but as for a man taking stock every month, and preparing an abstract of accounts every month, the idea was absolutely absurd. What was the object of this motion? What was to be attained by it? They had the accounts brought down in the Financial Statement, they knew exactly what the figures were for the whole year, and there was a quarterly abstract published in the *Gazette*, and he would like to know what further information honourable members wanted. As far as the criticism of the Financial Statement had gone he thought it showed that the Statement itself was a credit not merely to the Colonial Treasurer, but to his department. None of the figures had really been controverted. The Financial Statement was the essence of simplicity. The accounts had been presented in such a manner that any member should understand them; but the members of the Opposition were unable to understand them, and, no matter who the Colonial Treasurer was who presented these accounts, he would be unable to present them in such a way that those honourable gentlemen would be able to understand them. There was an old and a very true saying that "None are so blind as those who will not see." Those gentlemen who had been criticizing these accounts were suffering from what might be called "financial catarrah."

An Hon. MEMBER.—Not a financial cataract.

Mr. HOGG said their criticism was the result of a distorted vision. They looked at everything through jaundiced spectacles, and hence they found that these accounts, which were simplicity itself, were garbled, cooked, manipulated for the specific purpose of deceiving the people of New Zealand. He thought any Third Standard schoolboy could read the Financial Statement through, and would be able to understand the figures it contained. Everything had been presented in such a manner that any one who chose could realise the position of the colony.

An Hon. MEMBER.—Have you read it?

Mr. HOGG said he had read it, and he had commented on it in a very different way from that of the honourable gentlemen who had been commenting on it that afternoon. He saw nothing complicated about it, and he had been able to understand it thoroughly. He thought he showed that in his criticism when he spoke in the financial debate. He entered into the Statement itself, and did not sail all round it. No Statement could be more complete. Since the present Colonial Treasurer took office that was one thing he could be congratulated on—he had presented Statements that disclosed fully the financial position of the colony. In

Mr. Hogg

face of the fact that even the Conservative Press of New Zealand—and it was largely Conservative—had been unable to criticize the Statement effectively, he thought it unfair that questions of this kind should be raised in the House now at this stage. If no good object was to be attained, he should like honourable members to consider this: Assuming this resolution was carried, and that the return was laid on the table, and that no benefit was derived from it, what was the cost of this return going to be to the colony? How much was it likely to cost?

Mr. G. HUTCHISON.—Nothing.

Mr. HOGG said they would have a deluge of accounts and an avalanche of figures, and honourable members opposite would be unable to understand them, as they had been unable to understand plain figures in the Financial Statement. What would they say? They would say, "Nobody can understand these figures." If anything could create confusion it would be a statement such as that which was now demanded. The statement would be of no utility, and it would involve very heavy cost. For that reason alone he hoped honourable members would not entertain this resolution. Who had ever heard of a man taking stock every month? The thing was unheard of. To do so once in six or twelve months was the regular thing, for it would be ridiculous to take stock and prepare a balance-sheet every month. On the ground of expense and trouble no business-man would entertain such an idea. He hoped the honourable gentleman was not pressing this motion in sincerity. He must know positively that such a statement was absolutely preposterous and absurd, and would never emanate from any commercial house. The statement would be most costly, and he hoped honourable gentlemen would not entertain the idea of having a statement of this kind prepared. They had the very fullest and most ample information in the Financial Statement, and beyond that no honourable gentleman who wanted to know the position of the colony properly had any need to go.

Mr. G. HUTCHISON would ask the House to notice that the Colonial Treasurer had not ventured to say that this return would be a costly one, nor had he ventured to say the materials were not at hand for its preparation. The last speaker, however, had the hardihood to assert this would be a costly return. A similar return had been made in 1889, and was in the Appendices to the Journals of the House of that year as B.-5A. He noticed that in that return, printed in 1889, the cost of the preparation was nil. There was no doubt whatever that any honourable members who wished to make themselves acquainted with the mode of keeping the accounts must feel that a monthly statement of receipts and expenditure should be made, and not only would such a return be inexpensive, but it would involve no trouble whatever. Yet in view of these facts the House had been asked by the Minister to reject this motion. He said, "What good will it be?" Surely the country was entitled to the

fullest information in reference to the public accounts. The money was not the Treasurer's, but the people's of the colony, and the people were entitled to know exactly how much came in and how much went out at reasonably short periods. His honourable friend had intimated that no Colonial Treasurer would place himself in the position of having the accounts altered. This return involved no alteration in the accounts, for five years ago Sir Harry Atkinson consented to such a return. He was not going to press his motion to a division. The Minister had said that it would be resisted, and he (Mr. Hutchison) was bound, as far as this motion was concerned, to put up with this objection; but he wished the Colonial Treasurer to take warning that the refusal of these accounts must strengthen the doubt, which had to some extent been created, as to the genuineness of the statements in the Budget. If the Minister declined to give information which would cost nothing, and involved no trouble, as to transactions in the Treasury during the last financial year, he laid himself open, undoubtedly, to the suspicion of not having been explicit and frank with the colony.

Motion negatived.

FERNHILL RAILWAY.

Mr. J. McKENZIE moved, That the claim made by John Hamill and others in connection with the Fernhill Railway be referred to the Railways Committee.

Mr. MORRISON said that, seeing that this was a question affecting a part of his electorate, he would like to refer to the claim this Mr. John Hamill was bringing against this Fernhill Railway. He might say that this person had been employed on the Fernhill Railway, carrying on the maintenance and repairs that were necessary in the working of that railway, for a period of two or three years. For most of the two or three years that he was working for that railway he did not receive one shilling in respect of his wages. Mr. Hamill brought a petition before the House twelve months ago with regard to his claims against that particular company, and he was examined by the Railways Committee, who submitted a report recommending that his claim should be met. Since then no further steps had been taken in the matter, and he had again petitioned the House in order that his claim might be met. The question had been put on the Order Paper for the purpose of remitting it again to the Railways Committee, in order that they might bring down a report on the subject. He would like to point out that Mr. John Hamill rendered these services to the Fernhill Company some years ago, and that he had been in Wellington for something like over two years waiting for this matter to be settled. He had been tied up in Wellington hoping that his claim would be met. He might say that some of the alleged proprietors of the Fernhill Railway Company tried to compromise this matter with Mr. Hamill something like over two years ago, and they succeeded to a certain point, but when it came to a question of paying over the

money to Mr. Hamill he did not receive it, and had not received it yet. Now, seeing that the Fernhill Railway had been taken over by the Railway Commissioners, and, if he was credibly informed, the Railway Commissioners had spent over £800 upon that line to bring it into working-order, he thought the Government, acting on behalf of the people of the colony, should pay Mr. Hamill's legitimate claims as against this railway, and recover that expenditure, if necessary, before handing over this railway to whoever was the supposed owner. He (Mr. Morrison) knew that the ownership of the railway was a disputed point, but he was not going into that particular phase of the question just now. He wished to urge John Hamill's moral and legal claim against the railway to get his wages; and it was their duty to deal with Mr. Hamill, seeing that the Committee had already made a recommendation twelve months ago, and he was perfectly sure, when the question again went before the Committee, that, after going through the circumstances, they would make a similar recommendation. If they did so, he thought the Government would be justified in paying Mr. Hamill this sum of money, making it a charge upon the railway, or on whoever were found to be the owners. He was led to believe that the Government, or the Railway Commissioners acting on behalf of the Government, had expended £800 on the railway to make it good. He was led to believe they were prepared to forego that claim, and hand over the railway in first-class working order to its true owner without charging for interest upon this. This was a matter on which something might be said on the particular occasion when it came up. But if the Railway Commissioners, who had particular interest in the line, had expended £800 to make it good, and it was to be handed back to some particular owner, he should not be allowed to get it until he had met the claim of Mr. Hamill for his labour actually given. The debt should be paid by the Government of the day. He hoped the question would be remitted to the Railways Committee, and he considered they had a right to back up the Minister who placed this question on the Order Paper for the purpose of meeting Mr. Hamill's claim. He knew the circumstances surrounding the railway, and certain of the circumstances surrounding this railway were of rather a sultry character; but he was not prepared just now to discuss those circumstances. He had occasion to introduce a deputation which waited upon Mr. Seddon when he was in Dunedin some months ago, when these others, who were mentioned in the motion before the House, presented a claim for money lent. They certainly made out a strong case. He was not interfering on their behalf in the meantime. This matter would create discussion at some future time. He now simply urged on the House the immediate necessity of doing justice to Mr. Hamill's claim as against this railway for services rendered in connection with its maintenance. He gave those services for some considerable time,

and he therefore pressed the claim of Mr. John Hamill upon the Minister's notice. He hoped the Committee would go fully into the matter, and bring down a report like that of the Committee of last year, so that the matter might be definitely settled, and John Hamill recouped for any loss he had actually incurred.

Mr. E. M. SMITH could not, for the life of him, understand this proposal being on the Order Paper. This case came before the Public Petitions Committee, of which he had the honour to be a member, and they went very carefully into this question. Evidence was taken there very exhaustively, and it was true, beyond the shadow of a doubt, that this John Hamill had done the work in respect of which he claimed that he was entitled to the money, and he had heard the Premier, in his place in the House, only recently acknowledge as much. Now, such being the case, and as they had really ascertained who were the lawful owners of this railway, why they should have to refer the matter to another Committee he could not understand, unless it came to this: that the Petitions Committee was not capable of dealing with this question. It was just like setting aside what they had already done, and therefore wasting their time. The honourable gentleman who had spoken last had explained the case, and he (Mr. E. M. Smith) said it was one of those cases where an honest, hard-working man had done work of which the Railway Commissioners had received the benefit, having taken over the assets of this railway, and if they had taken over the assets they should also take over the liabilities. This was one of the liabilities, and it should be paid. He knew this case was fully dealt with by the Public Petitions Committee, and Mr. Hamill had been hanging around trying to get his just claim settled. He had been waiting for two years to attain this result. Was this the way they were going to do their business in New Zealand? It was not honourable, and not what they should do in the eyes of the country. When the Committee investigated this case they, by a unanimous resolution, sent a recommendation to the House, and effect should be given to that recommendation, and they should not be called upon at the later stage of the session to deal with the case again. What could the Railways Committee do beyond what had been done already? He believed the Committee would give the matter due consideration, and would deal with it in an honest and straightforward manner, but they would have to go over the same ground that had been traversed already, and they would have to summon men from Dunedin to make the statements they had already made before the Petitions Committee. It was doing the work of the House over and over again. He merely made these few remarks in order to get what was just and reasonable and fair for Mr. Hamill. He hoped the House would carry the resolution, and not only do that, but, if any gentlemen were present who belonged to the Railways Committee, he hoped they would endeavour to settle this matter once and for ever.

Mr. Morrison

Mr. MILLS said that, as Chairman of the Committee before which the petition of this man went, he would just quote the decision as recorded in subsection (4) of the report. It reported,—

"If, after due inquiry, it is found that John Hamill, one of the petitioners, has been constantly employed on the said railway-line, the Railway Commissioners be recommended to pay him such wages due."

He believed that the Railway Commissioners were fully satisfied that this man had done his work, and he believed also that he had done it feeling confident that he would receive from his employers the money he claimed. So far as he could ascertain, when the question was before the Committee the difficult point they had to deal with was this: By Act of Parliament this Fernhill Railway was vested in the Railway Commissioners without their having any right to take it. They also informed the Committee by letter that they objected to take charge of the line. But still, as it was left to them, and there was no other party to take it, and this man having continued to work upon it steadily, there could be no doubt he was entitled to payment of his claim, and he (Mr. Mills) was astonished that nothing had been done to meet the claim, which was a very honest and just one. He believed there could be no doubt of the liability that existed in respect of this man's claim, and as a strong recommendation had come down from the Committee last year it ought to be settled.

Mr. J. McKENZIE said it was most desirable to submit this matter to the Railways Committee, as the agreement made by these gentlemen with Mr. Hamill was disputed by them—he meant, the gentlemen who were supposed to be the real owners of the Fernhill Railway; and the Committee, after going into the matter, and finding whether the claim set forth by Mr. Hamill was a fair and honourable claim against this railway or not, would advise the Government, no doubt, accordingly.

Motion agreed to.

GAMING BILL.

On the question, That the amendments made in this Bill by the Legislative Council be agreed to, with the exception of new clause 7,

Mr. BELL wished to explain the matter to the House. The House had resolved that the number of totalisator licenses should be reduced. The Colonial Secretary had pointed out that he would have very great difficulty himself in selecting the clubs to which licenses should be granted. Then it was proposed in the Statutes Revision Committee—the Colonial Secretary being a member of that Committee—that a club should be formed consisting of representatives of both trotting- and racing-clubs, and, if the Colonial Secretary was satisfied that such a club was a representative one, he should delegate to it the selection. The Colonial Secretary said he was unable to decide, when asked to grant licenses, even with

the recommendation of the Stipendiary Magistrate, whether clubs were managed by persons to whom a license should be granted or not. It was seen that it would not do to leave the matter to the metropolitan racing-clubs, because they might be antagonistic to the trotting-clubs. The reduction had to be made, and the invidious task of determining upon whom the reduction should fall was left to a representative institution to be constituted out of those clubs which had had licenses before. He had no desire to force this amendment, but he hoped honourable members would see that, so long as the House allowed the totalisator business to be a matter of legislation, it was impossible for a member of the Government to properly perform a duty which would best be performed by representatives who had a certain sense of responsibility.

Mr. THOMPSON thought it wise that the honourable gentleman did not wish to press the amendment, as he had no chance of forcing it upon the House. The whole dispute about the Bill had been the power given in clause 5. Now, a clause had been inserted in another place the whole object of which was to hand over the sole control to the central clubs.

Mr. BELL.—Not to the central clubs.

Mr. THOMPSON knew exactly what was meant by the Bill; it was of no use for the honourable gentleman to try to throw dust in the eyes of the House. The object was to centralise the whole of the power in the central clubs, and he warned members not to be misled by the honourable gentleman's special pleading, and not to allow the large centres to dominate the whole colony as far as racing was concerned, and to say this or that club should or should not get a license as they thought proper. Their object was to get as many of the licenses for themselves as possible, and to build up large central jockey-clubs, and stop racing in the country districts altogether. If the House was prepared to stop racing so far as the totalisator was concerned he was prepared to vote for it. But, so long as the totalisator was licensed, he would, so far as possible, and he hoped every other country member would, insist on getting a fair use of it, and they were not going to place themselves under the control of the large clubs in the centres. He knew, from his experience in Auckland, the result would be that the country clubs might as well shut up at once. He hoped the House would not for a moment listen to the proposal to insert the clause in the Bill.

Captain RUSSELL said the whole of the arguments used by the honourable member for Marsden with regard to the desire of the metropolitan clubs to injure the country clubs were based on an entire fallacy. If the honourable gentleman would take the trouble to read clause 7 he would see for himself that all the power was taken away from the metropolitan clubs entirely.

Mr. THOMPSON.—For the purpose of setting up another club to take their place.

Captain RUSSELL.—And how was this new club to be constituted? To represent not less

than one-half of the clubs which had had totalisator licenses issued to them during the year. And what did that mean? It meant this: There were five country clubs or ten country clubs to every single metropolitan club; therefore the power of the country clubs would prevail over that of the metropolitan club. He did not suppose it was possible to convince the honourable gentleman, who appeared to have quite made up his mind on that point, but if the honourable gentleman would only read the clause himself—and he fancied the honourable gentleman had not read it, or, if he had, he did not understand it—he would see there could be no shadow of doubt about it. He would read the clause to the House: "If it be shown to the satisfaction of the Colonial Secretary that a representative racing-club for the colony"—not any particular metropolitan district—"has been established by the vote of at least one-half of the clubs which received licenses to use the totalisator during the twelve months mentioned in the preceding section," and so on. Seeing there were probably one hundred and fifty racing-clubs in the colony, and only ten metropolitan clubs, he thought the honourable gentleman's objection was not well founded, and that the arguments which he had put before the House were exceedingly illogical. So far as that clause went, he did not care very much about it, and he did not suppose anybody else much cared whether it passed or not, but the honourable gentleman had taken an entirely erroneous view of the position.

Mr. SEDDON said he did not agree with this new clause. He thought it would be a most dangerous clause to place in the Bill. The responsibility was thrown by the Bill upon the Colonial Secretary, and the Legislature intended that he should have that responsibility. This clause would, at all events, whether the position was such as had been stated by the honourable gentleman or not, take from the Colonial Secretary that responsibility which it was originally intended he should have. Not only that, but he feared they would have in the colony certain clubs which would dominate, and it was, he thought, clearly expressed, when the Bill was before the Committee of that House, that there should, at all events, be an even distribution of licenses or certificates given by the Colonial Secretary—that the power should not be given to him to further the interests of the metropolitan clubs to the detriment of the country clubs, but that in the distribution of the licenses he should act fairly to all. He feared that the scope of the amendment would be to divest the Colonial Secretary of that responsibility, and to place upon an irresponsible body the duty which should be really discharged by some one who was responsible to Parliament. They had no right, he thought, to pass a Bill which tended to do that. He therefore thought it would be well for the House to keep the power within itself of controlling the issue of these licenses; therefore he would support the motion.

Mr. BELL would like to explain that he ac-

cepted what the Premier stated, but the clause was inserted with the consent of the Government, as some honourable members understood it.

Motion agreed to, and Mr. Bell, Mr. G. Hutchison, and Mr. Lawry appointed a Committee to draw up reasons for disagreeing with new clause 7, inserted by the Legislative Council.

REFERENDUM BILL.

Mr. O'REGAN.—Sir, the Bill which I have now the pleasure to bring before honourable members embodies a very great principle—that of the government of the people by the people and for the people. I think it is only fair that I should say that no credit whatever is due to me in connection with this Bill. To Mr. O'Connor, the late member for the Buller, is due the full credit for having brought this Bill before the House; and, as he is now excluded from the councils of the country, I think it is only fair that I should pay to him the tribute that is due to him. There are, however, several differences between the Bill introduced by Mr. O'Connor last year and the Bill which I now have the honour to introduce. I trust honourable members will agree with me in considering that these new provisions are improvements on the previous Bill. Mr. O'Connor's Bill provided under eight separate heads the questions to be referred to the people—namely, an alteration of the Constitution of the colony; an alteration in the present mode of conducting the administration of the Government of the colony; an alteration of the electoral laws of the colony; an alteration of the land-laws of the colony; an alteration of the education system; any proposal for a loan; any Bill in which it is provided that such Bill shall not become law till there has been a vote taken thereon. The present Bill—if honourable members look at clause 2—provides,—

“Whenever both Houses of the General Assembly shall have passed a resolution in favour of submitting any question to the vote of the electors, or whenever the House of Representatives shall have passed a resolution in favour of referring any measure which has been twice passed by such House, and twice rejected by the Legislative Council, to a vote of the electors, then such reference shall be made in the manner hereinafter provided.”

It is thus provided that any measure which has been twice rejected in another place can be referred by this House to a popular vote. The reason invariably alleged for the rejection of measures passed by this House is that they have not received the sanction of the country. This Bill affords this House an opportunity of ascertaining the views of the people and getting a popular verdict promptly and accurately. I do not think this provision can be objected to. The Bill provides further that the poll can be taken on a day specially provided for, or on a day when a general election or licensing election takes place. The vote may also be taken through the Post Office. I have originated this clause myself. I have made this provision be-

Mr. Bell

cause a number of honourable members have objected in private conversation to the Referendum on the ground that it would be a costly mode of ascertaining the people's decision. I think this method of ascertaining the popular voice does away with the objection of expense. Of course it will be always open to the House to decide on the particular method in which the poll shall be taken. The various Postmasters throughout the colony are to act as Returning Officers, and the electors will receive voting-papers on application at the different post-offices. Honourable members will notice that ample provision is made for giving notification to the people of the intention to take such poll by advertisements in the newspapers, and, by the posting of notices at all the post-offices and school-buildings throughout the colony, of the day on which the poll is to be taken. It may be asked, and doubtless will be asked, “What is the object of the Referendum?” The answer to that is very brief: It is to enable the people to rule. I am quite prepared to hear that the adoption of the Referendum tacitly implies some failure in the present system of representative government. I do not deny that; but I do deny entirely that we have such a thing as representative government. Under our present system there is no such thing as representative government. Until we have a system of proportional representation, such as is provided by the Hare system, we can never have the real representation of the whole people. Let us consider the present position. It is absolutely impossible for the electors of the colony to give their decision emphatically upon any question. We all know very well that under our present system of election it is quite possible for a minority to return a member over the heads of a majority. For instance, suppose there are two candidates contesting a constituency for which one has to be returned. How many questions are there at issue? First, there are personal considerations allied with both candidates; secondly, there are numbers of issues on which the question may turn—there are local considerations which may obliterate all others; one candidate may have particular ideas on the question of Prohibition; one may be a Free-trader, and the other a Protectionist. And, after all, it is utterly impossible to say, after the election has taken place, and the member has been returned, what really is the popular will on any of those questions. Therefore I think it is perfectly fair to say that under the present system of election we have no such thing as really popular government. The Government of the day is not in touch with the people at all. There is no doubt whatever about that. Honourable members opposite may laugh, but I would say the same thing if they were on the Ministerial benches. Honourable members opposite need not think that I am giving them any praise in speaking of the Ministry of the day in this manner, or that I wish in any way to disparage the honourable gentlemen on the Minis-

terial benches. The objection would apply with aggravated force if the Opposition occupied the Ministerial benches. I think the objects of good government are to secure the highest possible happiness and well-being for the people who are governed. We know very well that it is impossible to say that the policy enunciated by the Government of the day has the sanction of the people, for reasons which I have already laid down; but under the Referendum no side-issue whatever could be involved. A question could be submitted to the people which would not be allied to any side-issues or personal considerations, and the people would give a vote, "Yes" or "No," upon the question submitted to them. Under that system and no other can we ascertain what really is the decision of the people on any question of the day. I would ask this House, how long would the standing armies in Europe exist if there were a popular vote? In Switzerland, where the Referendum is a recognised thing, there is no such thing as a standing army—there is only a citizen defence force. It has been suggested by many writers in the Continental reviews that the way to prevent the declaring of war and to prevent the increase of naval and military expenditure is to refer all these questions to the

8.0. vote of the people. Sir, I can say, if they had, for instance, the Referendum in Britain and Ireland, Home Rule for Ireland would not be so long delayed, and the House of Lords would not be in the way, blocking the democracy from doing justice to the people of England, Ireland, or Scotland. And in this country I venture to say, also, that a great many things have been done by different Governments which never would have been done had the people been allowed a controlling influence through such a measure as the one now before the House. The principle of the Bill has been adopted in various parts of the world. In Switzerland it is allied to what is known as the "initiative"; and here I may remark that I have not provided the "initiative" in the present Bill, because I think it is wise to have the measure as simple as possible; and, if the Bill once becomes law, the other provision is certain to soon follow. The "initiative," I may explain, simply means this: that a certain number of electors—I think thirty thousand in Switzerland—have the right to demand the introduction of any measure in the Legislature, or to demand the repeal of an existing law. Then the question is submitted to the people's vote and decided one way or the other. In America the principle of the Referendum has been adopted more or less throughout the different States. Mr. E. P. Oberholtzer, in his recently-published work on the Referendum in America, tells us,—

"The Constitutions have become repositories for much of the legislation which before was left to be enacted by the Legislatures. For example, we have to-day such provisions in the Constitutions as the following: Establishing a public-school system, and stating, in minuteness, as to how it shall be maintained; establish-

ing colleges, universities, and other institutions of learning; fixing the scheme of revenue, and placing limits upon the taxing-power; exempting certain properties from taxation, and detailing the manner of assessment; prescribing the subjects for which the appropriation of public money may be made, and limiting the power to create indebtedness; organizing the militia forces; stating how railroads and other companies may become incorporated, and the rules which they shall observe after incorporation; fixing the rate of interest; prohibiting the sale and manufacture of intoxicating liquors; prohibiting lotteries; fixing the salaries of public officials; establishing or prohibiting banks; making rules for the management of penal and reformatory institutions; prohibiting prize-fights and duels; defining the relations of husbands and wives, and of debtors and creditors; establishing a legal day's work; stating the methods of administration which shall be employed in counties, cities, townships, and other local districts; making legislative and Congressional appointments; and removing from the State Legislatures the power to make city charters, and vesting it in boards of freeholders, chosen by the electors within the respective cities."

Then, coming nearer home, we find that a Commission has lately been appointed in Victoria to inquire into the question of constitutional reform. It has reported exhaustively on the question, and has spoken very strongly in favour of the Referendum. If honourable members will give me their indulgence for a few minutes I will read some extracts from this report. The report says,—

"The Commission are strongly impressed with the advantage of the Referendum. It provides a simple method of obtaining an accurate expression of the popular will on any question. While the necessity for putting the Referendum in force might only rarely occur, the power to obtain the decision of the voters would be an important factor, especially in any disagreements that might arise between the two Houses."

One of the Commissioners, Mr. Shiels, while not agreeing with the main body of the report, says, in a memorandum appended to it, "I recognise there are manifest advantages in the use of the Referendum." The report has been drawn up by some of the leading public men in Victoria—R. W. Best, Graham Berry, Alfred Deakin, I. Isaacs, A. J. Peacock, W. Shiels, W. A. Trenwith, and George Turnbull. In Switzerland, which may be called the home of the Referendum, and where, as I have already explained, it is allied to what is called "the initiative," we find that there are very few questions indeed which become law without having first obtained the sanction of the people through the medium of the Referendum. A correspondent, in a recent issue of one of the Melbourne papers, writes thus concerning the position in Switzerland:—

"The Referendum is of great utility in checking extravagance in the spending departments. The House is not allowed to disburse

money, except in very small sums, without the popular consent. Two instances, out of a great many, will show how closely the Legislature is watched. In 1881 the Department of Justice was short-handed. It was proposed to appoint a permanent secretary at a salary of £250 per annum. A Bill passed both the Houses unanimously. The national voting on this proposal was 150,000 for and 215,000 against. At the same time an extra officer was wanted at the Swiss Legation in Washington, and it was proposed to appoint a secretary at £400. The grant for this legation was only £2,000. It had to attend to important mercantile work as well as the usual diplomatic business. The trade between the two countries was in a flourishing condition. It amounted to nearly £5,000,000 a year, taking exports and imports together. No one could consider £2,000 a year as an excessive cost. Yet, in spite of all arguments, the people rejected this paltry increase by 220,000 against 188,000. The Referendum is now thoroughly popular in Switzerland. It has, in the past, very often proved a truly Conservative force; it has prevented hasty legislation. In other countries it is the vested interests that are usually most Conservative; here the same effect is produced by the jealousy of the Cantons and the dread of over-centralisation. This feeling has more than once led to the temporary rejection of wise and useful measures for which even the Conservatives voted. On the other hand, it has caused the fullest and freest discussion of all proposed changes. It has educated every Swiss voter in political and economical questions; and, finally, it has insured a more hearty acceptance of, and obedience to, each new law when passed, because even its sturdiest opponents know that it has been enacted not by an accidental majority or by parliamentary log-rolling, not by the mercenary votes of professional politicians, who, reeling out of the parliamentary smoking-room, loaded with venal champagne, record a party vote; but that it has been passed by the deliberate action of their fellow-citizens—those who work with them in the same trades, gain the same wages, are harassed by the same difficulties, and who have considered, rightly or wrongly, but honestly, that this new law will be a public benefit.

"It will now be clearly understood why there is no crisis when the two Chambers and the Executive fail to agree. If the matter be of minor importance it can wait; if of considerable consequence it is brought forward by the irresistible will of the sovereign people."

But we need not go away from our own country for examples in favour of the Referendum. For instance, the principle has been affirmed for many years past in connection with local loans, which are raised only after a majority of the ratepayers have declared in favour of doing so. Then, what do our liquor laws affirm but the principle of the Referendum? And there is no doubt, whatever differences of opinion we may have upon the liquor question, it is perfectly in harmony with

true democracy to have the question decided by the popular vote. There is not the slightest doubt the people should rule in this as in all other matters. Then, again, we had an example during last session which, to my mind, furnishes a strong argument in favour of this Bill. It would seem in New Zealand that the principle of this measure is being forced upon the country by the irresistible logic of events. When that famous dispute arose between the Hon. Mr. Cadman and the late member for Auckland City, Mr. Rees, what was done? There was an appeal to the people, and so the dispute was settled promptly and satisfactorily. Sir, I may be permitted, perhaps, to refer to yet another argument in favour of the Referendum from the district I have the honour to represent. Some time ago the Victorian Government sent a geologist—Mr. Murray—to report upon the advisability of prospecting our quartz lodes at deeper levels. Mr. Murray's report was favourable, and he recommended that several claims throughout my district be tested at a greater depth. To do this, Government aid was necessary. When the present Minister of Mines, Mr. Cadman, was on the West Coast some time ago, he explained to the different companies interested that it was only possible for one of them to obtain a subsidy. Of course, all the companies that were reported favourably upon by Mr. Murray were anxious to get the subsidy, and the difficulty was to decide which one was to get it. The Inangahua County Council took the matter in hand, and submitted it to the popular vote. A large majority in the district declared in favour of the Black's Point Low-level Company receiving the subsidy, and so the matter was settled at once in a businesslike and decisive way. Now, Sir, I claim for the Referendum—and I think all true democrats will agree with me—that it is the only possible way of allowing the people to rule; it is the only possible way of allowing them to give their opinion straight upon any particular question. At election-times they are incensed by personal considerations, racial animosities, and religious prejudices, which are often stirred up by cunning and designing politicians. Hence it is impossible for them to record their votes clearly upon any particular question. No matter how desirous to do it they may be, they have not the means of doing so—they have not the machinery to decide positively upon any particular issue. Now, although the people are often led away by popular cries and side-issues, and prejudices of all kinds, they are in the main just. There is in the whole mass of the people, I contend, a deep-seated desire to do what is right. But, Sir, a man who is in a passion, no matter how honourable or how good his intentions may be, is not qualified to give an impartial verdict; neither are the multitude, stirred up by the heat of an election, qualified to give an impartial verdict upon any of the questions of the day. This Bill would remove that difficulty; it would enable the people to discriminate between persons and measures. And

Mr. O'Regan

another advantage which, to my mind, the Bill would confer upon the people is that it would engender a feeling of patriotism. If there is one thing more than another which shows the good side of human nature it is the love a man has for his native country—that tender and glorious tie which binds him to a spot of earth, and which causes his memory to cling with enduring affection to the place where he was born, and where he spent his earlier years. It is often said in terms of reproach that the national feeling which is the pride of people from the older countries is wanting in New-Zealanders. I freely admit that there is a certain amount of truth in this; but, to my mind, the reason is clear. The older countries are replete with historical reminiscences, whereas we in a new country like this have no real history, and, consequently, no national feeling. But, Sir, if we wish to engender a national feeling, if we wish to make the people patriotic, we must make them feel that they have a direct voice in making the laws by which they are governed. That, in addition to liberal land-laws, enabling every man to make a home for himself if he is anxious to do so, will do more to defend New Zealand and to make her independent of foreign attacks than all the defence-plans and elaborate naval schemes yet propounded. May I be permitted to answer a few objections I can anticipate with regard to the Bill? I am prepared to hear it said that people are not sufficiently interested in any great burning political question to give an intelligent vote. But we heard exactly the same arguments used against manhood suffrage. Later on against woman suffrage we heard the same absurd objection, until it became stereotyped, and it was said that women would not go to the poll because they took no interest in politics, and that therefore it was practically useless to give them the franchise. But before we can expect the slave to show the qualities of the free-man we must first make him free. I fail to see the force of saying that, because some men and women do not sufficiently appreciate the benefits of the franchise, the rest should be deprived of their just rights. I fully admit that at first, and for some time after this Bill becomes law,—because I am certain it is going to become law some day, and that before very long,—people may not give what is called an intelligent vote. We can hardly expect them to do so. They will not take the same interest in the political questions submitted to them as they will in later years when they will have become initiated into the simplicity of the Referendum; but it is our duty to give them the means in every way possible, and I am quite sure that in a few years they will take the same interest in law-making as the men and women of New Zealand have taken in the parliamentary franchise. The contention, which I am pretty sure will be raised,—that the people will not take an intelligent interest in the questions submitted to them—is no argument at all. It is merely an objection devoid of any argument—a red-herring drawn across the scent.

I believe the very essence of democracy is that the people must rule. In any true democracy the source of all power must be the people. Even the most Conservative old Tory will admit that the people must rule, and the chief objection we have heard urged even from the Conservative ranks against any proposed reform is that the people do not want it. This Referendum will enable us to ascertain beyond doubt what they do want and what they do not want. At the present time we may liken the voice of the people as heard in this House to an inarticulate roar; but with the Referendum in force they will be able to make their voice heard with the clearest possible articulation. We shall still hear the voice of the people in this House, but with a clearer and more perfect enunciation. I do not want to occupy the time of the House longer, because any further arguments I may use will not emphasize the undeniable merits of this Bill; but I appeal to all true Liberals in this House to support what is in reality a Liberal and progressive measure. If they want the people to rule the people, and New Zealand to be governed by New-Zealanders,—if they want simple and pure government and stable institutions,—they are bound to vote for this Bill. I have much pleasure in moving the second reading.

Mr. SAUNDERS.—I trust that a Bill of this importance will not be allowed to go without any remarks from any of the honourable members present. The speech we have listened to is, in my opinion, one of the most purely democratic speeches ever delivered in this House. No man who really wishes the people of this country to be the governors of themselves and their country can find any fault with that speech, nor can, I think, any democratic member of this House have any other wish than that the proposals of this Bill shall be carried out. Like the Bill introduced the other night—the Elective Executive Bill—this Bill does not go far enough. It does not go, in my opinion, nearly far enough. It gives us a very small taste of a very good thing; and perhaps, as prudent men, it is just as well to take this, and I do hope that the proposals will not be rejected by this House, and especially that no member of this House will be induced to vote against it through any supposition that the Bill contains something dangerous and radical or extreme: because there is nothing extreme in the Bill itself. It is simply a very moderate measure—extremely moderate—an almost homeopathic dose, giving to the people the rights they ought to possess in every democratic country, or in every country that professes to be democratic. The mover has referred to what has been done in America and what has been done in our own country in the same direction; and I think no one will doubt the fact that in both countries a direct appeal to the whole people has done good. Some of our most rash loans have been checked in that way; and it would be a great blessing to this country if the rash loans proposed by the Government this session had to go back to be approved of by the people before they could be

entered upon by this House. I see the Minister of Education is taking notes. No doubt he will advise us to reject the proposal, but it would meet his approbation entirely if he did not happen to be on those benches. He happens to be on the Government benches, and therefore he will oppose anything that would give any power to the people which he can now keep in spite of them. Honourable members may remember the verses we have heard about Charles the First,—

"Men live for kings," said Charles; "my will must guide you all."

"Kings live for men," said Pym, "or they shan't live at all."

Men in power do not often want a change which might displace them: but we ought to legislate for the good of the whole population. I have little to say in addition to the remarks made by the mover of this Bill; but I venture to anticipate in some small degree such objections as those we heard the other night. It was then said that we should not take our pattern from Switzerland. The "Referendum"—the name given to this Bill—is peculiarly Swiss. We are told that we should not take our pattern from Switzerland because the women work in Switzerland, and because the cows work in Switzerland, and also the goats. It may be information to some honourable members who now sit on the Government benches to know that goats were worked, and worked a great deal, in the early days of our settlement in New Zealand. I have seen eighteen goats drawing a plough in New Zealand. When we first came here very few settlers could own a horse, and if a settler had a cow he found it exceedingly convenient to use the cow in ploughing, carting, and in any work of that kind. I could point out a most respectable and successful settler in Nelson who, like the Swiss, well understood the utilisation of our domestic animals, and whom I have seen making a very good use of cows in the yoke, and ploughing up first-class land. I do not think we should look upon the Swiss as an inferior race because they are poor, and are wise enough to make a better use of very small means than we do. They are a very honest, industrious people. And, with regard to the relative work of men and women, it is more than eighty years ago that Goldsmith, in his *Geography*, told us that women were slaves in Spain, servants in Italy, housewives in Germany, ladies in France, and queens in England. Well, Sir, Goldsmith wrote that long before the present Swiss Constitution was adopted; and, if that was the case when Goldsmith wrote his *Geography*, I dare say that those people will retain something of the same habits they had in Goldsmith's time, and that there may be a tendency amongst the Italians and Germans to do as we find them doing in Switzerland—calling upon the women to do a great deal of hard work. I am afraid that this is not confined to Switzerland, and that if some of the members now on the Government benches, instead of travelling amongst the centres of population, would go

Mr. Saunders

a little more into the outlying districts, they would find women doing the same very heavy work at the present time. We know that Switzerland is a highly-educated country, so highly educated that it has been proved difficult to find a single man or woman in that country who could be selected for the purpose of trying experiments as to what could be done in the way of educating those people who were not able to read and write, and, although a man was wanted for that purpose, it was a long time before one could be found, and, when found, he was not a native of Switzerland. On this question of the Referendum we have for our guide a highly educated country, a country that is proud of its liberties, and that has, in spite of its poverty, wisely and bravely carved out for itself a system of government to secure the liberties of its people and their children. That being so, I think any one who has fully studied the system under which Switzerland is now ruled will see that there is a remarkable love of liberty inspired into almost every breast in Switzerland. Then, we have heard that they obtain very low wages, and one Minister told us that he hoped we should not go for guidance to a country where persons were so wretchedly paid as they were paid in Switzerland. Is poverty, honest inevitable poverty, to be a subject for reproach in this House? The territory of Switzerland is only four times as large as the electoral district that I have the honour of representing in this House, and the population of Switzerland is four times as large as the whole population of New Zealand. In a country that has reached the very utmost limit of its capacity in carrying population there must be a hard struggle for existence, and it is as absurd as it is unjust to say that the people are to be reproached because, under those circumstances, they are willing, both men and women, to undertake any honest industrious occupation that is necessary in order to maintain their existence and comfort in such an extremely limited country. But, Sir, notwithstanding their poverty, what do we hear from all historians?—That they are of all people in the world the most ready to support their education liberally; that they not only support their primary education, but they have four systems of higher education, all of which they are prepared to support liberally; and, while they pay the President of the Executive, the highest officer in the country, only £540 a year, they are prepared to give not only the education free, but every slate, pencil, and book free to the children of the country. Now, Sir, I think all these things are not a subject of reproach to any people; they are subjects for which any people ought to be honoured; and therefore I trust that nothing which has been said against Switzerland, or against the people of Switzerland, or against their successful system of government, will for a moment weigh with any member in the consideration of this important question to-night. What we want to do is to obtain government as pure, as economical, and as honest as we can possibly get it;

and I believe that nothing is more calculated to educate the people of any country up to the best system of government for themselves, and to take a hearty interest in that government, and that individual interest which is so necessary to insure success, than that every individual in that government should feel that he has a potent means of giving expression to his views, and that it is quite possible that the most momentous question that can be laid before any country may be decided by the single vote of a humble individual. That, Sir, is an excellent thing to educate the people to. That would be offered under this system; and the more we can get to that system—the more we can get directly to the people, the more each individual is brought to feel that the welfare of his country depends upon his own individual integrity and intelligence—the better it will be for this or for any other country.

Dr. NEWMAN.—I rise to support this Bill, and only hope it will some day or other become the law of the land. The honourable gentleman says, in clause 2, that all laws which have twice passed in this House, and twice been rejected by the Legislative Council, shall be referred to a vote of the electors. Now, is it not a fact that when the other House has rejected quite a number of measures there has been an appeal to the people. And that House is passing now a large number of measures which were rejected by it last year because there was a reference of the question to the people in the meantime. Therefore I think the Referendum does not apply in this case, and I should advise the honourable member to alter the Bill by striking out that clause. I think the honourable member will find that for years and years the Radicals in Switzerland believed the Referendum was a Radical measure, but as a matter of fact it has been found to be a Conservative measure. If the honourable gentleman wants to be progressive let him add the "initiative" to this Bill. That "initiative" is the progressive idea he desires to get at. Looking over the book on Democratic Government published by Lavelaye, I find that in the course of fifteen years the Referendum was taken on sixteen questions; and would it be believed that in eleven cases out of sixteen the country refused to accept the law? In Switzerland the law is being constantly altered. The fact is that this Referendum is an appeal not to the cream of the intelligence of the country as shown in a House like this, it is not an appeal to the advanced order of things, but to all that is slow and sluggish. All the apathetic people vote against these laws, and, whenever the Referendum is applied, twice out of three times there has been a rejection of the laws which have been passed by the intellect of the country. That is what the honourable gentleman calls a Radical measure; but I call it just the reverse. The history of Switzerland shows clearly that whenever a question of expenditure is referred to the people it is always rejected. They are always against expenditure. In reference to such a question, for example, as the raising of Ministers' salaries, or the

salary of the Agent-General, there is this interesting fact in connection with Switzerland; that, as Lavelaye says, when the question of raising salaries has been referred to the people they have been found to be ferociously hostile to such expenditure. The people have nearly always voted against it,—except in one case, with regard to the question of the erection of a useless bridge across the Rhone. A number of people wanted that expenditure, and they voted a million for the bridge. Those who voted for it got the expenditure as wages, and made others pay for it. Then, amongst other questions brought up was one that directly hinges upon such a question as the Hawkers and Pedlars Bill. They had the Referendum applied to decide as to whether commercial travellers from France and other countries should have the right to travel and sell goods against the Swiss storekeepers. And what did the people say upon that question? They said the commercial travellers from other places should be allowed to travel the country. The most marked thing about the Referendum in Switzerland is that it nearly always rejects the measures brought before it. I hope the honourable gentleman will amend clause 2, and will further add a clause giving the "initiative." Further, I might say it is very remarkable that in Switzerland, though at first they did not appear to care much for it, the voting on it has increased. Originally, it started at 66 per cent., and the voting has increased up to 88 per cent. As a matter of fact, there is this curious thing shown: that, whereas politicians nearly always like expenditure, like the present Government and their predecessors, because it draws to them no end of power when they make roads and bridges and give everything the people want, yet, when the consent of the people who have to pay the bills, and who do not gain all the good out of the expenditure that is incurred, is asked, then the people nearly always reject it. They are nearly always as economical as the honourable member for Selwyn. There is this further remarkable thing: that when the Referendum is applied by the whole nation, the people generally reject the proposed laws, and when the vote of the cantons is taken by the Referendum it often supports the Ministers of the day, showing that the smaller the State the more are its members in touch with the people. Therefore the Referendum upholds the action of the Cantonal House and rejects what is submitted to the whole nation. The honourable gentleman said there would be no standing armies if the Referendum were applied, and that there was no standing army in Switzerland. Does he not know that there is such a thing as military service in Switzerland? Does he not know that there was a proposal made that certain rich people should be exempted from military service, and that proposal was rejected? And yet he does not call it a standing army in Switzerland. He calls it the Swiss guard, but when it comes to fighting it will be found to be very much the same thing as a standing army. I do not intend to occupy the time of the House,

but I wish to say that the idea contained in clause 2 is an idle farce. The only time when the Referendum should come in is when a large number of the people demand that there shall be a referendum. Now, in a sparsely-populated country like this, fifty thousand people would be a very large number to demand a referendum.

Mr. SAUNDERS.—It would be twelve thousand here in the same proportion.

Dr. NEWMAN.—Twelve thousand would be very much more reasonable. By the time they got together twelve thousand it would have a very good chance in the country. As regards the "initiative," I should only have to call meetings on a question which I brought before the House a few days ago proposing to admit women here, and these women would set in motion the initiative, and this House would perforce have to legislate on such a question as that. I should be inclined to support the honourable gentleman very much more heartily if he would strictly limit the right of Referendum, and enlarge the "initiative" of Government, instead of retarding it.

Mr. ALLEN.—Sir, I am not quite sure whether the honourable gentleman who last spoke is in favour of this Bill or not. I gathered from his opening remarks that he was objecting to the Bill because of clause 2. I doubt whether the Bill would be of much use if that clause were cut out. Therefore I gather he is not in favour of the Bill. The honourable member for Selwyn gave us some wise axioms with regard to this Bill, and I think he was attacking some of the arguments that were used the other evening in regard to a Bill of a somewhat similar nature—arguments apparently introduced depreciatory of Switzerland. I did not hear those arguments, but apparently they came to this: that, because cows and goats had to work in Switzerland, therefore Switzerland was a bad country. I do not know that upon that account Switzerland ought necessarily to be considered a very evil place. I do not wish to say anything in a depreciatory manner of Switzerland; I have great faith in the country and in the people, and especially in their education system, which stands in the front rank of any educational system in the world. But does it not seem an unfair thing to say that, because a set of circumstances are suitable to Switzerland, therefore they must be suitable to New Zealand? The conditions of Switzerland may be, and are, entirely different from the conditions of New Zealand, and therefore I say that, though under the conditions prevailing in Switzerland a particular form of government, the "initiative" and the Referendum, may be suitable to that country, it is no fair argument to say that therefore they are suitable to New Zealand. The conditions of Switzerland are peculiar. There is no other country in such a peculiar condition. Composed of very different parts as regards people speaking different languages, surrounded on all sides by nations which at one time or another have been their foes, they are bound to cohere together in some unusual way, and they

have adopted an unusual plan of government, and that plan includes the "initiative" and Referendum. It may be suitable to them, and I dare say it is. At any rate, so far I do not think any one can say it has worked very badly: I think it has worked out well. But, because it has worked out well in Switzerland, it does not therefore follow that it will work well in any country that exists under entirely different conditions. We have here a means of referring questions to the country as satisfactory as that adopted in New Zealand. We have the Referendum in New Zealand, and if any one reads this Bill he will find the Referendum proposed is almost exactly the Referendum we already have. Every three years the Bill says the question may be submitted to the people. And are not questions now submitted to the people of New Zealand at every general election? Why, it is really during the election that we expect to find out from the people what their opinions are upon the main questions submitted to them, and which are matters for practical politics. It is quite true, as my honourable friend said, that certain conditions happen, as during the last election, which may influence the voter: that is to say, he may not be able to vote on all the questions submitted to him, or his vote may depend on some peculiarity of his own, some personal liking for or dislike to a candidate. But these are exceptional cases, and as a rule the questions submitted to the people are really the main questions that are to be considered by the House, and the House then finds out through elected members what is really the opinion of the people on these questions: and that, Sir, is the Referendum. The Referendum, I say, which we have is as complete, and is quite as well adapted to our circumstances, as the Referendum is to the circumstances of the people existing in Switzerland. Now, the honourable gentleman who is moving the second reading of this Bill made some remarks with regard to the Referendum. He says we have it here in New Zealand in certain cases. I say we have it here in all cases, and quite complete too. But the honourable gentleman quoted one or two instances of its application, and especially with regard to loans to local bodies. Now, I do not think he could have quoted a much more unfortunate instance than this. What is the whole tendency of the House?—To get rid of the Referendum submitted to the local bodies. What do we find as the result of this Referendum? That, as a matter of fact, progress is stayed. Instead of being a Liberal measure it is a Conservative one, and works which may benefit the people are prevented. Why? Because the people do not take the trouble to go to the poll. And that is the difficulty with the Referendum question. Then, the honourable gentleman used another peculiar argument as regards the Referendum. He quoted an instance in which two gentlemen belonging to this House, having some difference in the House, submitted their difference to the electors for them to decide, and he says he

Dr. Newman

considers the decision of the electors—or, as he calls it, the Referendum—was an essentially satisfactory one. Well, now, Sir, was it satisfactory? Was not every argument he used with regard to what takes place at any general election applicable in that case? Were not personal influences and influences of all kinds brought to bear? I will not say that bribery or corruption were used, but I say undoubtedly undue influences were brought to bear. I do not particularise the honourable gentleman who now sits in the House; but by both sides influence was brought to bear on the electors; and, if the honourable gentleman quotes that as an instance of the Referendum, I do not think he could have quoted a very much worse one. In the course of his remarks, also, he drew the attention of the House to one of the authorities upon the question, and quoted a work by Oberholtzer in favour of the Referendum. Well, it is quite true that in his book he does speak with considerable admiration of the Swiss system generally, both the “initiative” and the Referendum; but when you come to analyse all that is in the book you will find that there is a good deal to be said against the Referendum. Now, Oberholtzer writes that during the years from 1875 to 1879 there were only eight questions altogether submitted to the Referendum, and during the sixteen years from 1875 to 1891 there were twenty-seven of the laws submitted to the people for their voice to be given upon them. What was the result? Out of twenty-seven, twelve were accepted and fifteen were rejected. And this same man the honourable gentleman quotes as an authority on the subject, what does he say upon the question? He says this, and I recommend it to the honourable gentleman for his consideration: “Generally the vote was intelligent, except from 1879 to 1885, when a wave of jealousy swept over the country through a fear of being overshadowed by the Berne Government.” Now, that is a remarkable exception, because, it seems to me, it points to the chief objection to the Referendum—“The vote was intelligent, except from 1879 to 1885, when a wave of jealousy swept over the country.” It was not acceptable then, and, if this wave of jealousy swept over the country, it was not the fair voice of the people. He says, “During these six years, when the Referendum was demanded on nearly all laws of much importance, and without regard to their character or value, they were defeated by large majorities.” Now, Sir, if that is the case in Switzerland, which the honourable gentleman takes as his model, and which he sets before the House as the particular example we should follow, then, if it can be said by this writer, who writes strongly in favour of the Referendum, that through a wave of jealousy sweeping over the country there can be such an effect as that nearly every proposal submitted to the country is thrown out by large majorities, owing simply to jealousy, I ask, can that be cited as in favour of this particular system? But the honourable gentleman went on to quote further information as

regards the effect upon the constituents, or as regards the condition of the constituents, when the question is submitted to them through the Referendum. There are many other works which give us similar information to what is given by Oberholtzer himself. Professor Dicey, writing in the *Contemporary Review* in 1890, says this: that it “prostrates everything to the worst species of tyranny and despotism—the ever-varying will of an irresponsible multitude.” Now, that is a particularly strong statement too. Under the system of the Referendum everything is prostrated, as we are told, “to the worst species of tyranny and despotism.” Now, Sir, we have tyranny, we have had despotism, even in this House, and I admit this much: that during the course of the last few weeks my views even upon party government have been somewhat shaken, and I admit that it would not require much more of action such as has been exhibited here of late to induce me to go with the honourable gentleman in his opinions; but I realise that, although we have tyranny and despotism here sometimes, yet, at least, we have a check to that tyranny and despotism in the Opposition, weak though it is at present, but I hope it will not long be so. And I think Professor Dicey is right when he says there can be a worse species of tyranny and despotism even than the one here, and that is the tyranny and despotism of an irresponsible multitude. Now, if these questions, under the Referendum, are submitted to the multitude, and the multitude is to a large extent irresponsible, how are the multitude, for instance, to be educated with regard to the questions submitted to them? They are educated to a point, you will answer, by what is done in this House, and written in the newspapers, and through *Hansard*. How far does the education that is sent forth through the newspapers or through *Hansard* sink into the multitude itself? The newspapers themselves give a very partial account of what occurs here—of the arguments adduced for or against any measure here—and they, perhaps, reach further than anything else; but, after all, they only send to the multitude a mutilated extract of what takes place here; and I say, therefore, under the condition of things as they are, when there are no other means of educating the multitude than at present exists, it is fair to assume that on most large questions they would be irresponsible to a very large extent. It is not fair to suppose that the ordinary man who would give his time to the consideration of public questions can instinctively know what is right or wrong with regard to them. He has either to read or be educated in some way or other with regard to them, and I say, therefore, that under existing circumstances it is fair to assume that a large proportion of the multitude will be irresponsible, and the tyranny and despotism of that irresponsible crowd will be found to be worse than the tyranny and despotism which might and possibly does exist here sometimes. But we have the cure very largely in our own hands, if we like to apply it. If party government were used, and not abused,

then that tyranny and despotism could not exist here; but, unfortunately, there are those who sacrifice too much to the party call, and it is sometimes used when it ought not to be used, and it is this abuse of the principle that has led to the cry for reformation. And it is not the use, or, at any rate, it is not the proper use, of it that has led to any cry for reform. We can reform our party government if we take the trouble, and have a more satisfactory system than in past years; and, that being the case, what is the use of the "initiative" or the Referendum to the people here? I believe we have all that is necessary, as regards the Referendum, on the public platform when a man meets his constituents,—and he meets them often enough. Every three years we meet them at the general election, but, as a matter of fact, we meet our constituents every year on the platform, and we talk to them on what has been done here, and what is about to be done here, and we learn from them then what their opinions are upon the matters that have been done, and upon what is about to be done, in the House; and I say that is a Referendum as effective and as effectual as the one that is being carried out in Switzerland. And is it to be supposed that our condition would be bettered by this or any other scheme of Referendum that could be adopted here? Now, Sir, I do not wish to say anything particular about Switzerland itself, or its method of government. There is one note here which, perhaps, is applicable to the case in point. It is a quotation from Winchester—I dare say the honourable gentleman knows the book—who also writes in favour of the Swiss Republic, and Winchester says this: "Switzerland appears to have firmly resisted certain evils—viz., corruption at the polls, civic jobbery," *et cetera*. Well, that is an argument in favour of the Swiss as a nation. I do not know that it has anything particular to do with the Referendum. And he goes on further to say, "Service in the Federal Legislature is accepted from a sense of patriotic duty." That can be said here also, even under our present system of government? It is fair to assume that everybody who accepts service in this House does so out of a sense of patriotic duty. It applies, therefore, as well here as it does to Switzerland. He goes on to say, "The election of deputies to the Swiss Assembly is an event which creates no violent commotion, or even general interest, in the great body of the people." Now, Sir, if an election creates no commotion, no interest, in the general body of the people, of what use is it? I say, no use at all. There is no other purpose for which at an election a candidate goes on the platform but to raise a commotion—but to rouse an interest on the part of the people; and, if this is all that can really be said in favour of the Referendum, or one of the main arguments to be used in favour of the Referendum, I say it is not needed in a country like this.

9.0. Then, he goes on to say that a large majority of the candidates are unopposed. Well, Sir, should we consider it a satisfactory thing if a large majority of candidates were un-

Mr. Allen

opposed? Would the minority have any "say" then? The honourable gentleman wishes, no doubt, to protect the minority.

Mr. O'REGAN.—And the majority.

Mr. ALLEN.—No doubt the majority must rule; but where a candidate is unopposed it is fair to assume that the minority has no voice at all—not even through the rejected candidate. And he says, "An election is not the occasion of bustle or clamour, &c., probably not even of a speech." An election takes place under the Swiss Government without even a speech, and there is no commotion, no excitement. Well, I do not think an election of that kind would be considered satisfactory here—it would not be considered a satisfactory one in any democratic country. Surely, if a democratic constitution means anything at all, it means that the popular voice is to be heard and represented. Under this condition of things, Goodness knows what voice is represented—it may be the voice of the minority, one does not know. They do not care; they let the same people go back and represent them year after year, and no change is made; and the result is that members go back from time to time, and scarcely any alteration takes place in the representation at all. It may be said that this is only an argument to show that the men they choose in the first place are so good that they can always be sent back. I am not a firm believer in such a condition of things—that you can select a man so good that he will suit the circumstances at all times. I think the infusion of a little fresh blood is extremely valuable. Fresh blood is needed in this Assembly as well as in any other, and I do not think the continual placing of the government in the hands of the same individuals can be said to be the essence of democratic government. Then, I will give one quotation, from the same work, in regard to party government. Mr. Winchester says,—

"Political parties perform functions of the greatest possible importance; through their organizations is fulfilled that obligation which is incumbent upon every citizen of a republic, to give an earnest, careful, and habitual attention to the conduct of government. Parties are the exponents and representatives of the great issues that constantly arise in every free community."

Well, now, I think if a writer who has been arguing in favour of the Swiss government and referendum writes in this way of party government under favourable conditions, it must be a good thing: "the exponents and representatives of the great issues that constantly arise in every free community." Is not this the best thing that can be said of any system of government? What more do we want? There is no definition that I know of that can be said to be more perfect as the definition of a system of government than that mentioned by Mr. Winchester. And I think, although it may be abused—and no doubt it has been in the past, and may be in the future,—what we have to strive after is to get rid of the abuses rather than to do away with what

has been built up after years and years of steady construction — rather than destroy it ruthlessly, and put something in its place about which we know nothing except the experience of a small country like Switzerland, under conditions entirely different from our own. We ought to adhere to our own system of government, and remedy any abuses that may exist. I hope the Bill will not pass its second reading. Turning to the Bill, I cannot see how, though the honourable gentleman is in favour of the Referendum, this is going to help him. It is not a Referendum Bill in the true sense of the word. The Bill is most peculiarly drafted. Under clause 2, as the honourable gentleman pointed out to the House, when both Houses require a measure submitted to the Referendum, or when one House has twice passed a measure and the other House has rejected it, then it is to be so submitted. But the peculiar clause, to my mind, is clause 5:—

“The vote shall be taken at every polling-place in the colony whereat votes are taken for the election of members of the House of Representatives, and before Returning Officers presiding at such places, and may be taken on the same day as a general or licensing election.”

Of what value would any system of Referendum be, taken at the time of a general election? Why, we refer questions to the people three or four times more often than that now. This is a retrograde step, and I do not think, therefore, that those in favour of a Referendum should vote for this measure. I could understand, if the honourable gentleman were arguing in favour of the Referendum pure and simple, that he should bring forward a Bill that would say that at any moment, if the House decides, after a Bill has been placed before it, and after it has been passed, at any reasonable time the question could be referred to the people; but to say that at every general election we can submit a question to the people, why, Sir, of what good is that? It seems to me that in attempting not to go too far the honourable gentleman has not even gone far enough to make his measure of any practical value, even though he supports the principle. Therefore I think that not only those opposed to the Referendum should vote against the Bill, but those in favour of the Referendum should vote against it, as being practically a useless and unworkable measure.

Mr. REEVES. — Sir, I have not the same objection to this Bill that I had to the Bill of the honourable member for Waitaki the other night. I do not think it is nearly such a bad measure as that was. In fact, under certain circumstances, I might be found voting for the Referendum, but those circumstances have not yet arisen. If, for example, the Upper House persisted in setting itself up against the people's will in the way it did last Parliament, and if it were found necessary to abolish it, as it may be necessary to abolish it some day, then, no doubt, an additional check on hasty legislation would be required, and in default of finding some other satisfactory check I should be prepared to support the Referendum. But,

as an additional check upon all the checks we have already, I say it is not only not wanted, but I think every Liberal in the country ought to steadfastly resist it. The honourable member for Selwyn thought that it was absolutely perfect, and that every Democrat was bound to vote for it. Well, Sir, I do not know; I believe myself to be a Democrat, and those who abuse me loudest have generally thought I was too much of a Democrat; but I do not think I shall be forfeiting my title by opposing the Referendum in the present condition of our parliamentary government. I certainly do not do so because I happen to be sitting on these benches. The honourable member for Selwyn was good enough to impute that to me without the slightest ground for doing so, and without any provocation on my part. I think it is decidedly unfair in him to turn round on me, sitting quietly, as I was, and listening attentively to what was going on, and to assume that I was going to take a certain course, and to attribute a certain motive as the cause of my taking that course. If a Minister is not to be allowed to vote on a constitutional question without its being said that he does it because he is a Minister, where is this sort of imputation to end? For example, if I were to say that certain members voted for the measure because they are not Ministers, and never were Ministers, it would be considered a very poor-spirited sort of argument, and I think it would be. But it is quite as unfair to attribute to me a bias against this measure because I am a Minister as it would be for me to attribute to the honourable gentleman a bias in favour of the measure because he is not a Minister. I do not believe he is biassed in favour of it because he is outside the Ministry. I believe he supports it because he has studied its working in other countries and thinks it desirable to adopt it. I give him every credit for that; and I say I oppose the measure because I have studied its working in other countries, and I do not think that, with our two Chambers and triennial Parliaments, it would be a desirable thing to burden ourselves with another constitutional check. We have got checks enough already. The whole procedure of this House has been elaborately devised as a check to hasty legislation. Bills are read a first, a second, and a third time; they are referred to special Committees, and they are debated clause by clause, and even line by line, when going through Committee of the Whole. Then they are sent to another Chamber, and the whole process is gone over there again. The other Chamber has the power of rejecting them, and then we may not send them up again at once to the other Chamber, but we have to go through all the process again, beginning *de novo*. Surely it is enough to have all these, without being asked to have another burden laid on our backs. Those who call themselves Liberals and reformers, who are constantly bringing in fresh legislation, have surely enough checks to fight against without having another tribunal to appeal to, before which to fight for our measures.

and a tribunal which practical experience in Switzerland has shown to be possessed of considerable Conservative bias. Because there is no doubt that, if you take a Bill to the people, there is a considerable disposition on the part of the people to oppose it, simply because they are not acquainted with its details, and are therefore suspicious of it. There is nothing more common in this country than for men either not to vote at all on a question because they do not know much about it and will not take the trouble to learn, or else to oppose it because they have not time to master its details and are therefore disposed to be suspicious of it. Now, it is not desirable to take away from a tribunal like this Parliament, which is forced, by the conditions of its existence, to study every question carefully, and to gain a thorough knowledge of it—it is not, I say, advisable to take the ultimate power away from a tribunal like Parliament, and give it to a tribunal that is not forced to study questions, or to obtain a knowledge of them, or to discuss them. What does this mean? It means legislation without discussion: that is the Referendum; and I say, as a matter of theory, it is not a desirable thing. Knowledge is, after all, a most precious thing in this world, and study is a most desirable thing. Expert education and expert information are also very useful things to be brought to bear on a question. All these things we get here; the very coming here and being elected is in itself a political education. A man cannot, as a rule, gain the confidence of a constituency in New Zealand without showing that he has studied public questions, and that he possesses a decent and fair amount of elementary knowledge of them. He cannot come here without gaining a great deal more knowledge and studying a great deal further; and he cannot sit here for a few years without becoming, to a considerable extent, at any rate, a practical politician. Now, a tribunal of practical, well-informed politicians is a much safer body to trust the details of legislation of the country to than is the mass of the people outside. As it is, however, the people of New Zealand have the fullest and completest power of controlling the general principles of their legislation; and, if they had not, I should support any conceivable scheme which, by simplifying the elections and making them more popular, would give to the popular voice more complete control over their representatives and, through their representatives, over the general principles which guide legislation in their Parliament. But when you have fixed the general principles, then I am inclined to think that direct interference of the people with legislation has probably gone far enough, because I think it desirable that their representatives here should have a free hand as regards details. How many of us are there who, coming here, and having a measure laid before us, do not, if we honestly and fairly discuss it, see our way to modify our opinion on certain details, even on very important details. Very well, that is the result of the various checks which are laid

Mr. Reeves

upon hasty legislation here; that is the result of the attention we have to give; that is the result of the listening which we have to give to arguments on both sides; and it hardly ever happens that a measure introduced in this House is not immensely improved during its passage through Parliament by all this process of study and delay. But you propose, as I say, to take away from Parliament the ultimate power of deciding these questions, and to hand over legislation to a body which is not compelled by the conditions of its existence to go through all this process of listening and weighing, of studying and judging. Well, as a matter of theory, I think that is not an attractive prospect, and I think it would be better, as far as we can, to retain the legislation in Parliament, giving the people the fullest and the most direct control over their Parliaments. The honourable gentleman, however, has not brought down in this Bill anything like what is known as the Referendum. This is a most singular proposal. It is to give Parliament power to do what they have power to do already—that is, after a measure has been twice rejected by the Legislative Council, then we can, if we like, appeal to the country. Why, Sir, we can have that now. The only difference is that, instead of placing a Bill before the country, the representatives go to the country and ask to be elected on the general policy before the country. The honourable gentleman says that by submitting a Bill to the country, instead of submitting a representative, you disembarass the questions thus laid before the country of all side-issues and personal considerations. That is an attractive argument, a specious argument, and there may be something in it, though I do not think there is very much. But are we to suppose that, if a Bill is sent to the country and laid before the voters there, every man will vote upon it entirely without personal considerations and uninfluenced by side-issues. I am inclined to think nothing of the kind will be the result. Do you mean to say, if a Liberal Government had been beaten on a measure twice, and we submitted that measure at last by Referendum to the people, that the Conservative electors would vote upon it simply upon the merits of the question itself—that they would not be influenced by the fact that it came to them from a Liberal Government, supported by their enemies the Liberals, and opposed by their friends the Conservatives? I am inclined to think that the personal issue will be almost as strong in voting for a Bill as it is in voting for the selection of a representative. What is it we are constantly told in this House? That men do not vote on the merits of a question here when a Bill comes before them. Do you suppose that the people of the country are going to be so immensely superior to their representatives here that they will vote quite impersonally and impartially on the merits of every question, when we are constantly told that their representatives do not do it now? I should say that personal considerations would weigh almost more in the country than here,

because the people of the country will not study the Bills carefully, will not know nearly as much about them as we must know about them here, and therefore will not be swayed by their merits. I think you will get almost every disadvantage you get under the present system, and you will get other disadvantages of a peculiar character. First of all, I say, there is the Conservative nature of this constitutional reform. The honourable member for Wellington Suburbs amazed me by the speech he delivered, for he spoke dead against the Bill, and yet said he would vote for it. And he let the cat out of the bag by saying that it was a Conservative proposal. Very well, I say that that, to a Liberal, ought to be a distinct disadvantage. It is, in my estimation. I do not want more Conservative checks in this country. I think we have quite enough already. Then, secondly, there is the question of expense. Now, that alone is something, because we have enough elections in New Zealand. Already the country is crying out all over New Zealand against the expense of perpetual fresh elections. What are we trying to do at the present moment? We are trying to devise means to prevent this enormous expense. In the Licensing Bill there is a proposal that the vote should be taken at the general election, chiefly in order to abolish the extra expense. We have a large number of local elections already, of an embarrassing and expensive character; and not only is the question of expense one we have to consider in multiplying elections, but there is another question I think we should consider, and that is, that these perpetual elections annoy and weary the people to such an extent that you cannot get them to take an intelligent interest in them. They get so sick and tired of elections that they end by not coming to vote. Why did we a few years ago go back to the triennial licensing system instead of continuing the annual one? Because we found the expense so great and the people so sick of perpetual voting that they would not take the trouble to come and express their views intelligently. Well, if you are perpetually multiplying elections you will find them decided by an apathetic people, and an apathetic people means an unintelligent people. For that reason, therefore, I think we should hesitate before having more elections, because that is the meaning of it. Are we to have many referenda? Are we constantly to refer questions to the people?—because, otherwise, if it is only to occur once in two or three years, I do not see the use of it. If it is only for the affirmation of questions of public policy once every few years that you are to refer to the people, we have got a good enough reference now, because there is no doubt we do get the public voice on highly important and leading questions of policy at the general election. If, on the other hand, it is to be details or second-rate questions that you want to refer to the people, on the ground that you do not get a vote on them at the elections, then I say that the expense, and the annoyance, and the wear-

ness will be so great at these perpetual references that the people will sweep the whole thing away—will spit it out of their mouths, and beg and implore us to do the business here and not worry them with it. These are, I think, important reasons why we should hesitate before we indulge in a scheme which, although theoretically attractive, is not, to my mind, a practical issue in this country, because you will find that some of the greatest enthusiasts for the Referendum are to be found in countries where they do not have triennial Parliaments—in countries where the reference to the people is once in every four or five years, where the franchise is extended only to a section of the people, and where, consequently, the members are not sufficiently closely in touch with their constituencies. Now, none of these reasons, which apply in England and in America, apply here. Here, as in Switzerland, we have triennial Parliaments; sometimes elections are held at even shorter intervals. Therefore I think the people are satisfied with the number of references to them. I have not heard any outcry on the part of the people of New Zealand that they have not sufficient influence over Parliament, or that they are not represented here, as the honourable member for Selwyn said. I believe that they are represented here, and that they were never better represented here than they are at the present moment. I believe that this Parliament is more representative of the mass of the people than any Parliament that was ever elected. That is my view; and I believe that, as Parliaments go on, the people get better and better represented, and therefore less and less reason will exist for the Referendum. Were Parliament elected under a restrictive franchise, or were the mass of the people terrorized over or kept away from the poll, then I could see very good reason for having a Referendum. But the fact is that the people have got so closely in touch with Parliament, and their voice is heard so loudly, that I think it is less necessary now to have the Referendum than ever during the period of our history. Now, the case of Rees *versus* Cadman was brought in very oddly, I think, by the honourable member who introduced the Bill. If the Rees-Cadman case was an example of a successful Referendum, then, I say, that is an excellent reason for not passing the honourable gentleman's Bill, because it is evident we can get the Referendum under the present system. I should not call the Rees-Cadman incident a specimen of the Referendum, but at the same time it was a direct appeal to the people. It was to decide whether one gentleman was right and another wrong, and the people decided it in a very emphatic way, and, from my point of view, in a very satisfactory way. But, from the honourable gentleman's point of view, I should say it was an extraordinary argument to bring in, and that it was exceedingly illogical on his part. The rest of the honourable gentleman's speech was not illogical. I do not agree with it, but I think it was a logical and a very temperate and a very reasonable speech

—such a speech as one likes to hear in this House. The other evening, in introducing a constitutional question, I think the honourable member for Selwyn gave us a very much better speech than was given by my honourable friend the member who introduced that constitutional question. But this time I must say that I think the mover has given us a very much better speech than the honourable member for Selwyn gave us. The honourable member for Selwyn appeared to me to have kept rather wide of the Bill. He began by deprecating the lugging-in of Switzerland, and said he was opposed to deciding questions like this upon the strength of the Swiss example, and he referred to the fact that that had been lugged in in the debate on the Elective Executive Bill last week. Now, who brought it in? Why, the honourable member for Selwyn. One or two referred to it, and then came the honourable member for Selwyn, who brought it in, and very ably, as a reason why we should pass that Bill, because the system worked so successfully in Switzerland, and because the Swiss were such a fine, well-conducted, free, well-governed people. He said we could not do better than follow their example. Had he not brought in the Swiss parallel I should not have referred to it. He obliged us to do it, and now he deprecates our doing anything of the sort. I am glad he does. I take it as a confession that he and his friends got much the worst of the argument, and as a confession that they have had enough of it, and would rather we did not talk any more about Switzerland. I think we got very much the best of it.

An Hon. MEMBER.—The worst.

Mr. REEVES.—That is a matter of opinion. My friend the honourable member for Palmerston thinks we got the worst of it. He has a right to his opinion, and I have a right to mine. With regard to the Swiss example, has the Referendum anything to do necessarily with the happy and comparatively prosperous state of Switzerland? I venture to say that it has nothing at all to do with it, necessarily. The Swiss were a well-conducted and well-governed people long before they thought of adopting the Referendum. They were the admiration of

Europe before the Referendum was heard of in that country. The Swiss had established their education system, not perhaps in its present fulness, but to a degree which placed them far ahead of any other country in Europe. They were just as much ahead in education, I say, before the Referendum was established as they are now they have got it, and I venture to say that the Referendum has had nothing whatever to do with their education system. I defy any one to prove that the Swiss education system has been in any degree influenced by a single Referendum vote. It has been established and popularised entirely irrespective of the Referendum, therefore I cannot for my life see what on earth the excellence of the primary and secondary education in Switzerland has to do with the merits or demerits of the

Mr. Reeves

Referendum. You might just as well say that the excellence of the local government in Switzerland was due to the Referendum, though it was established before the Referendum. You might just as well say that the partition and distribution of land in Switzerland, which to a large extent adds to the well-being of the community, was also due to the Referendum. You might as well say that the unquenchable love of freedom which has been for centuries characteristic of the Swiss race is also due to the Referendum as to say that the other things which honourable members have mentioned are due to it. It is, I consider, to some extent, an experiment of the Swiss Constitution. A well-educated people has tried this experiment, but, from my point of view, it has not worked well, because it has worked conservatively in Switzerland. And I do not think it would work well here. I could understand a Conservative member voting for the Referendum, and that is the only explanation to me of why the honourable member for Wellington Suburbs has decided to vote for it. In spite of the fact that he does not believe in it, he is going to support it because it is a Conservative and not a Liberal measure. I look upon it, in the present state of our parliamentary system, as unnecessary, and I think it is likely to be expensive. I think it is likely to prove annoying to the mass of the electors, who do not want it, and have not asked for it. I think that in theory it is a backward step, inasmuch as it is taking away from Parliament—which is supposed to consist of thoroughly educated men, who are bound to discuss a question from both sides—the right to legislate, and giving it back to the people, who could not have discussed a measure, and would not discuss it. I think, moreover, it is practically needless at the present time; and, theoretically, it is a backward step. I think perhaps some Conservative check will be wanted in this country if the other Chamber is abolished, and, in default of any other Conservative check, I think the Referendum should be adopted if we do away with our present revising Chamber. But at the present time we have got a revising Chamber, and, providing that Chamber will be reasonable and show a disposition to submit to the voice of the people,—which, I am happy to say, it seems to have been inclined to do during the last month or two,—and provided we are able to pass Liberal measures for the next year or two, who is to say that that Chamber may not work, and that its existence may not be prolonged for a number of years? If not, I think, when the time comes to abolish that House, in default of any other Conservative check, I should support the Referendum.

Mr. G. W. RUSSELL.—Sir, the Minister of Education, who has just sat down, has pointed out the significance of the fact that this Bill is opposed by the honourable member for Wellington Suburbs and the honourable member for Bruce. Thus, the honourable gentleman singularly finds himself standing side by side with two representatives of the Conserva-

tive party. The remarks of the honourable member for Wellington Suburbs were extremely illogical, and I may say that the statement he made,—that he was going to support the Bill,—after the speech from him we listened to, was one of the greatest pieces of inconsistency I have ever heard. I think, Sir, it is very unfortunate that the only speech made from the Treasury benches in regard to this matter should have been one in opposition to the Referendum. We cannot forget that only a few evenings ago, when a proposal was made for an elective Executive, the Government Whip took almost unprecedented means to defeat that measure.

Mr. SEDDON.—The whipping was on the other side.

Mr. G. W. RUSSELL.—I am quite correct in saying that every effort was used by the Government on that occasion to defeat the measure introduced by my honourable friend the member for Waitaki. I am stating what I know to be a fact, and I think the statement I have made will be recognised by both sides of the House to be correct—namely, that the Government did use every effort it could to defeat the Elective Executive Bill. And I think it was very unfortunate that they did so, because all questions such as the Elective Executive Bill and the question now before the House should be treated in the broadest possible way, and honourable members who are supporters of the Liberal party ought not to be asked to sacrifice their convictions in regard to matters of this kind, neither should a vote in favour of a measure for parliamentary reform be regarded by the leaders of the party as tantamount to a vote of want of confidence. I do not think there is any such desire among members on this side of the House, particularly the new members. But we have a desire to discuss these questions, and to express our opinions regarding the possibility of reform in connection with party government. Now, the Minister of Education, in the address he has given us this evening, was not, in my opinion, in his references to Switzerland, so logical as he usually is. He stated that, before the Referendum was enjoyed in Switzerland, that country was the admiration of Europe in regard to its primary and secondary education. He admitted also that it possessed a system of local government which was of a very superior character, that its distribution of land was almost perfect, and that there was a love of freedom which had stood the test of many centuries. Does it not strike the honourable gentleman that, in a country possessing all these things, the adoption of the Referendum may be a further development of the progressive national spirit previously shown in the very matters the honourable gentleman brought out? I think, therefore, when the honourable gentleman, in the eloquent periods he gave us, referred to these phases of Swiss life, character, and education, he was suggesting one of the strongest arguments that could be adduced in favour of the Referendum. I think it will be seen

that, where the education of a country is almost perfect, where there is an almost perfect system of local government, where its distribution of land is such that it secures homes for the people, and where there is a love of freedom which has stood the test of centuries, we may reasonably suppose that the adoption of the Referendum is a further development of those higher qualities of statesmanship and national character which were mentioned by the honourable gentleman in his address. Now, the honourable gentleman also stated, in connection with the Referendum, that he would only be disposed to adopt it as a substitute for the Upper House. I could not help thinking, Sir, that the honourable gentleman appears all at once to entertain much more affection for the other Chamber as a Conservative check than he ever did before. Time after time Bills which he himself has brought down have been most unceremoniously kicked out by the other Chamber. Time after time measures which the Government have brought forward have been dismissed by it in a very summary way, and the honourable gentleman has not, on previous occasions, shown any regard for that body; yet he is now prepared to put forward the Upper House as a substitute for the Referendum. I do not think the honourable gentleman was right in stating that the Referendum would mean legislation without discussion. And here let me say that I disagree with several of the details of this Bill. I prefer the Swiss system, under which only those measures are placed before the country that have been actually passed by Parliament—they only are submitted to the Referendum, and that is much preferable to this Bill. I think I am correct in saying, so far as Switzerland is concerned, that the operation of the Referendum is compulsory on constitutional questions. Then, with regard to other questions, the Referendum may be applied if demanded, within ninety days of the publication of the measure, by thirty thousand voters, or by the Governments of eight cantons.

An Hon. MEMBER.—Fifty thousand.

Mr. G. W. RUSSELL.—I am quoting a good authority when I say thirty thousand. Now, if the Referendum were applied only to measures passed by both Houses, it appears to me that the checks which the Minister of Education referred to would apply, because there would be the first, second, and third readings in both Houses of the Legislature. Then, I should like to see in the measure a distinct enactment that that particular measure should be referred to the people by means of the Referendum. Thus a great many of the arguments raised by the Hon. the Minister of Education would be removed, because there would be those checks I have mentioned in the course of legislation, and then there would be the final appeal to the people. Now, I can quite conceive that there may be questions arising in connection with the legislation of New Zealand upon which it would be a great advantage indeed if we

had a Referendum. I have mentioned that in Switzerland they have a Referendum in regard to constitutional questions. There are comparatively few questions in New Zealand that can be called constitutional. I have sometimes wondered what is the Constitution of New Zealand, and I think some day it will be necessary for Parliament to set about forming a Constitution for the colony. What we call the Constitution Act at the present time is a measure which has been several times amended, and which constitutes the colony as a colony, but the people of New Zealand have no Constitution in the sense in which the people of the United States have one. We shall require some day to enact a measure which shall lay down once and for all the basal principles of our society—how the country is to be governed, and what are the imperishable and inalienable rights of the people. I think the time will come when we shall have to do that. As to constitutional questions, the Government have in contemplation a proposal to extend the influence of this colony to Samoa, and that is a proposal I shall support, as I will every reasonable proposal they bring down; but it does seem to me that, when the colony is about to enter into foreign relations, it would be a good thing if we could so far amend our Constitution Act that, when the Government of the day contemplate entering upon any negotiations in connection with the acquisition of foreign territory or the annexation of islands in our vicinity, it should not do so without the express sanction of the Parliament of the country. In that sense, I can quite understand that such questions as the annexation of Samoa—which may mean embarking on a foreign policy—would be proper questions to settle by means of the Referendum. And I should like to suggest another question upon which we might take the opinion of the people. There is no doubt that at the present time local government is in an unsatisfactory state. Sir, I am one of those who think that the people of New Zealand will never obtain anything like a satisfactory form of local government until we return to a modified form of Provincialism.

AN HON. MEMBER.—No.

MR. G. W. RUSSELL.—An honourable member says, "No." Well, I have watched the politics of this country, and I can remember very well the amount of work that was done under Provincialism, in connection with the establishment of educational institutions and other public works. Such an amount of work has never been accomplished since. Take, as an instance, the magnificent educational institutions of Canterbury and Otago. Does any honourable gentleman mean to tell me that under the central form of government there are likely to be such institutions in other parts of New Zealand as there are in Canterbury at the present time. Look at that magnificent work, the construction of the tunnel between Lyttelton and Christchurch. What possibility would there be at the present time of a large public work of that kind being undertaken in the colony? When you come to think how the

time of Parliament is wasted in discussing petty local measures, such as Harbour Board questions, and water-supply questions, it seems to me at times that we are using a wheel to break a fly. But we shall never get away from these purely local questions until we have some legislative machinery to enable the people to deal with them. If you compare the difference between the bush districts of the North Island and the open lands of the South Island, you will see the difficulty of passing laws relating to such matters as fencing and water-supply, which are, to a very great extent, matters of local consideration, and matters for local Acts, because they apply, to a very large extent, to particular localities. If we are going to undertake such a great work—if this House is to be asked, Is the time ripe for a return to a modified form of Provincialism?—then, I say, that question should be laid before the people of New Zealand. You would thus have a clear and distinct issue in connection with a particular question, and you cannot obtain so clear and direct an expression of opinion if you place such an issue before the people at a general election. That, of course, is more often beclouded with side-issues. What was the great cry at the last election? Was it the question of the Alcoholic Liquors Sale Control Act? Was it the question of Liberalism *versus* Conservatism?

MR. SEDDON.—It was not the question of the Referendum.

MR. G. W. RUSSELL.—I am quite willing to admit that; but I would point out to the Premier that there are many other questions that have been brought before the House during the present session that were not before the country even at the last election. This question of the Referendum is not the only one. What was the leading question at the last election? Was it the question of the Liquor Bill, or the question of cheap money? There were half a dozen different questions, all of which helped to make up the verdict of the country at the elections. If a careful analysis could be made of the voting I think it would be found that one portion of the country was strongly in favour of one particular question, such as the Land for Settlements Bill, and that that question controlled the election in the South Island, while the question which affected the voting in the North Island constituencies was the general question as between the Liberal Government and the Conservatives,—with the result that the Government came back with the large majority which they possess. Under this principle of the Referendum, instead of the particular issue being beclouded, a decisive expression of opinion would be obtained regarding the particular matter. With regard to the objections to the Referendum raised by the Minister of Labour, he stated, first of all, that it is a Conservative proposal: but the policy of the Liberal party is to "trust the people," and I believe such a measure as this is part of that policy, and that a proposal to submit clear and distinct issues to the people for their arbitration cannot be regarded as a Conservative pro-

Mr. G. W. Russell

posal. With regard to the other objections,—the expense, and the annoyance, of perpetual elections,—they are not questions we ought to take into consideration in any matter where a great principle is involved. I shall not detain the House further. I am speaking to-night, not upon the details of this Bill, but with regard to the general question as to whether or not there ought to be a further appeal to the people. There may be difficulties in securing such a right to the people, and I admit that the proposal is to some extent an experiment. Yet we have to experiment. I think that we are progressing fast in this colony, and, if necessary, in this matter we should create a precedent. In discussing a matter of this kind we should consider it upon the broad principle, and apart altogether from the question of who are on the Ministerial benches. I paired in favour of the Elective Executive Bill, and on the present occasion I have spoken independently of the views of the gentlemen who occupy the Treasury benches. I have every faith in the Government, but I do think, Sir, that Ministers ought to allow questions of this kind to be considered on their merits. My view is that, if the Parliament of New Zealand wishes a particular measure to be submitted to the people of New Zealand, it ought to be empowered to incorporate in the Bill that such measure should be so submitted to the people. I shall support the second reading.

Mr. SEDDON.—I was somewhat amused at the speech of the last speaker, who commenced his speech by hoping that the discussion of the Bill would proceed on broad, general grounds, and that personalities would be avoided, yet soon afterwards made a most personal attack upon my colleague the Minister of Labour.

Hon. MEMBERS.—No, no.

Mr. SEDDON.—There can be no mistaking the honourable member's language; and not only that, but he followed it up by making an attack upon the Government. He told us in the concluding part of his speech that he was perfectly satisfied that the Government were the right men in the right place, and were doing good to the country, and that the country was advancing. But, Sir, notwithstanding that, what did he say? That the Government had whipped up every vote they could whip up as against the Elective Executive Bill, which was discussed last week. Let me tell the honourable gentleman that, in reference to that Bill, the Government were so satisfied that the good sense of the large majority of the members of this House would reject it that we treated the matter with perfect indifference. At the very last moment it dawned upon the Government that the extreme left wing of the party, which had been "whipping" for weeks before, were prepared, absolutely, to refuse to give pairs to those who asked for them from this side of the House. We know that some honourable members had retired home early in the evening, and that the party I refer to had refused to give them pairs; and, I say, the leader of the extreme left wing called in question the honour of a member of this House because

his pair had been shifted. When the Government found what was the position in camp, it then became a question of what position the Government would take up towards those who had worked loyally with them on every question here. I found afterwards, by paragraphs in the public Press, that the Government were to be put on their trial in reference to this particular Bill; and what did we find? We found that the Conservative Press of the colony stated that there was a very large number of the party who did not trust the Government, and they held up the division upon that Bill as the groundwork for this contention. That was the foundation of those paragraphs. When I tell the House that two members of the Government were quietly reading in one of the adjoining rooms, and never voted at all, it will show that there had been no whipping. Honourable members must admit that it would show very bad whipping indeed to leave honourable members in the library who were against the Bill, and whom the Government wanted to vote against it. Probably the Whips might say that they were not aware that there were others of the party who were so anxious to play into the hands of the Conservatives and the Conservative Press. That was the position; otherwise the division would have been different.

Mr. G. W. RUSSELL.—I paired with the Treasurer directly he asked me to pair.

Mr. SEDDON.—I am not alluding to the honourable gentleman. I was speaking more for the benefit of the honourable member for Palmerston. The honourable gentleman concluded his remarks by saying that there was no colony, and, in fact, no country, that could compare with New Zealand. Then, why should our present Constitution be disturbed? We find that New Zealand is in the van—we find that our people are enjoying a freedom that is not given to the people of Switzerland or to the people of the older world. If we find that our position is so much higher as compared with that of Switzerland, why should we desire to disturb this state of things, which is doing so much for the people of this colony, and take a leap in the direction referred to—namely, that of Switzerland and the Referendum? We have heard that this Referendum has been in existence in Switzerland for a great many years; and what is the result of it? Has it improved the condition of the people of that country as compared with the condition of the people of New Zealand? I say Switzerland is not in any way any more advancing or progressive than New Zealand. I had the good fortune, during the early part of my life, to spend it near a Swiss settlement, and there I had an opportunity of meeting them and knowing from them the condition of their country, which they had left. You may read books and works by authors on the country, and on the condition of its people; but when one meets the people in the everyday walks of life, and converses with them as to the condition of the country, I beg to say there is no man in this House who would for a moment, if he understood the position or

condition of the people of the country, say that we should copy the system in force there. The honourable member for Selwyn held up the education system of Switzerland to us,—not only the primary, but the secondary system,—and he claimed, on account of their superior education system, that that in itself was a good ground for us to change our Constitution. But I say that in itself is not sufficient. We may take the older world, and, of course, it naturally occurs that in this respect—and I admit it—Switzerland has got well to the front; but surely the honourable gentleman will not say that here in New Zealand we are behind. I say we are not, but that we have here a general system of education which is held to be, by every right-thinking man in the country, equal to any; and, as the result, our young people will progress, and hold better positions than we have had the opportunity of holding. But that will not in itself make a country prosperous. Then, the honourable gentleman referred to the extent of the distribution of land amongst the people in Switzerland; but he little knows what is to be paid there in the way of rentals. I am surprised to hear the honourable member for Inangahua, knowing his views on the single-tax and the unearned increment, holding up Switzerland and the Constitution of that country. Why, they have had the Referendum for many years, and they are very much further behind than is New Zealand in the direction of the goal the honourable gentleman is leading to—very much behind. I say that the Swiss peasantry, as compared with New Zealanders, are absolute slaves. The honourable member for Selwyn said that the women of New Zealand in the country districts have to work hard; and I admit that farmers' wives have to work; but then it is work that is in keeping with what a woman may do without injury—

An Hon. MEMBER.—Not always.

Mr. SEDDON.—If they were to see the relics of barbarism brought out from Switzerland that I have seen in the Swiss settlement I have already alluded to—namely, the harness used by the Swiss women in their native mountains, and which they had to use in order to carry manure up hills, and to carry the produce down the hills, which appliances, fitted on the back, were also used by the women when traversing five or six miles carrying firewood and other fuel—honourable gentlemen would not come here and hold up that country as a country that is well governed. I say, let them refer that to the people of New Zealand; let them bring the harness and put it in the lobby here and say, "Switzerland is the country which allows harness to be put upon its women, yet we ask you to follow a country that allows its women to be used for such purposes." Sir, we are asked then,

10.0. in reference to this, to refer certain questions—nearly every question, if we follow the example of Switzerland and pass this Bill. Let me quote one example: There was a clerk to be appointed at a salary of £250 a year. This

Mr. Seddon

is referred to the people. Well, all I can say is this: I thought the honourable member had not understood the distinction and difference between the Cantonal Governments and the Federal Government. It should be well known to the members of this House that in Switzerland they have different peoples. There are peoples of diverse race in the different cantons—not such a people as we have here, and it may be that on several questions that were referred there was a large difference of opinion. The race-hatred there is as great as you will find on any part of the Continent, much more so: and, with this difference, it was necessary, as regards some of the larger questions, there should be this resort to the Referendum; but it is quite a different thing in New Zealand. On this question of referring to the people of New Zealand, what was the last question referred? For many years, I may say, no very large question has been referred to the people of Switzerland. The last question was, "Shall the State find work for every man?" What was the result? Ninety-two thousand voted for the proposal, and some three hundred thousand against it. Well, Sir, I will undertake to say here that, if you were to refer that matter to the people of New Zealand, I think, myself, the verdict of New Zealand would be somewhat different from the verdict of Switzerland. My honourable friend says that would be a great mistake, if it were so. I might therefore say for him, and to the honourable member for Riccarton, that, if the question of work being found for the people was referred to the people, if the people were to support that they would make a great mistake. In saying that, the honourable member is showing his Conservative leanings. What does the honourable member for Riccarton say now? Was not my honourable colleague Mr. Reeves right when he said this was a Conservative measure? I have no hesitation whatever in saying it is so, and I should not be at all surprised to find the Conservative Press of the colony supporting the proposal. Any change you make must be in their interest as compared with the existing state of affairs. Here you have now the views of the people in the House. You have the people fully represented. They are represented, shall I say better? and more in proportion to the wishes of the people generally than we have had it for very many years. Now is a grand opportunity for the people of New Zealand, through their representatives in this House; yet, Sir, I find those who have this opportunity given to them advocating and bringing forward measures which will take from them the right and responsibility which the people have insisted shall be given to them. I regret that they have fallen into such a position. Then, Sir, have we not the opportunity now—have not the representatives of the people here in this House now the opportunity to imitate the good that we find in Switzerland? We have that opportunity. If our education system is not perfect, we have power at the present time to perfect it. If we are not doing sufficient for higher education, then, I say, by all means let

us imitate Switzerland in that respect. There is no necessity to ask the people, "Shall we do it?" If it is required, we are here—a majority—bound to do our duty to the country. Let us do it. There is no necessity to refer that to the people. I would say to any honourable member who fears in that respect that he is wanting in that which is due to his constituents. Then, the honourable member says that when any question of moment, such as the annexation of Samoa, is proposed, that is a matter that might be referred to the people. Sir, we have had practically the annexation of Rarotonga by the Imperial authorities—a protectorate by the Imperial authorities, with administration from this colony, by a Resident Agent paid by the taxpayers of this colony. What interest would there be in a matter of detail of that kind—a pure matter of administration?

Mr. G. W. RUSSELL.—I should like to be allowed to explain that I merely mentioned Samoa as indicating a question of the colony embarking on a general foreign policy, and I thought that the question of a general foreign policy was one that should be submitted to the people.

Mr. SEDDON.—It shows the honourable member knows little of the history of his country or of the adjacent islands, or he would not have stigmatized Rarotonga, or Samoa, as being a foreign country. What I say to the honourable member is this: We have the line laid down for New Zealand. See for yourself, and I hope you will not again say that in proposing this we are proposing a foreign policy. I say, if we are to preserve our country, if what has been claimed for New Zealand as the Britain of the South is to be maintained and accomplished, then it behoves us to see to it who are our neighbours. We know the aboriginal race inhabiting these islands will and must go before the white man, and we should be very careful as to the selection of our neighbours. As opportunity is given, that opportunity should be embraced: in fact, it would be an insult to the people of New Zealand to ask them the question, because I believe from Stewart Island to the North Cape there is a general consensus of opinion that we should carefully watch these islands and, when opportunity presents itself, and in the interests of the race physically, and in every way, it is necessary that we should do our best. There is no necessity to refer a matter of that kind to the people of the country. The honourable member said there was the question of the abolition of the provinces, and regretted very much it had taken place, and said such a matter ought to have been referred to the people. Here, again, the honourable member shows he is not so well acquainted as he ought to be with what took place with reference to the abolition of the provinces. The abolition of the provinces occurred, I think, in 1875. That measure was submitted to the people, and, Sir, it was by that very submission to the people that the great wrong occurred which the honourable gentleman says hap-

pened. The very argument he is using is the strongest argument against himself. I would say there is no necessity whatever for us to return back to Provincialism. That there is a necessity for improvement in our local self-government I admit. I will undertake to say that there is not a member on either side of the House but will admit that our system of local government is defective, and that we are here and must before Parliament dissolves rectify it. We are here to do what is right for the country. Is it not preposterous that this should be referred to the people? The people are here in this Chamber. If the honourable member for Inangahua is not a representative of the people here, whom does he represent? I should like him to explain that when replying. I say we do represent the people of the country—that cannot be denied; and there is no question that has come before the House this session that has been carried by large majorities but if you refer that to the people you will find it will be indorsed by much larger majorities than the majorities here. That may be slightly against me, but still what we have done is in accordance with the wishes of the people. We know the opportunity given to candidates to lead the public mind; but, Sir, by simply referring a given question to the people, how is it possible the people can read the Bill referred to them to decide upon? They have not the time nor the opportunity, and they do not read it. We are here to watch generally the welfare of the country. Throw down amongst the people any given measure you like, and there may be some behind that measure who are advocating it as against the commonwealth, and, Sir, the position of those who are advocating it is superior to that of those who are opposed to it, inasmuch as those in favour of a change are more easily moved than those who are indifferent to it. It may be said that in any country there are people who are indifferent. Then, I say that, in the referring of a measure to the decision of the people, and under these circumstances, first of all, if it is to be done justice to, there is an expense of £20,000. That in itself ought to be taken into consideration; and then there is this fact: that the measure will not be understood by the mass of the people. Here, in this House, we have the members who fully discuss each and every Bill on its merits—trained men. We have members on the other side who combat sometimes, shall I say? for the purpose of combating, so that there may be criticism. But, Sir, if it is to be left to the people under the circumstances that I have indicated, then what shall we find? We shall find many good measures, probably, rejected by the people, and others approved by the people which would not be beneficial to the country. Sir, the honourable member made an extract. I think it was from a paper read before some debating society.

Mr. O'REGAN.—No.

Mr. SEDDON.—Well, it sounded to me very much more like that than a paper read before rational men—men who understood legislation,

and the legislation that takes place and is to take place. We are told in this paper that honourable members come reeling in suffering from the effects of smoke and champagne, and vote according to party, not knowing what they are doing. Now, I should like to say that the honourable member did not for a moment, I feel sure, intend that to apply to any one in this Chamber, or to those who are legislating for the people of New Zealand. If he has referred to some of the other colonies,—and a Commission was appointed to deal with this question in one of the other colonies,—knowing the unfortunate condition of those countries, probably the people who reported upon it, and who sat upon the Commission, might think it desirable there should be a change. But we have not arrived at that stage in New Zealand. We have heard words of approval from the Americans and from the adjacent Republics; we have people from the other colonies, and we have our Mother-country, copying what we are doing and what we have done; we find here a happy and contented people; we find our country, under adverse circumstances, fairly prosperous; we see the silver lining to the cloud; and, this being the condition of our country under our present Constitution—this being the condition, I say, although the people have suffered slightly by the action of those in another place, yet we find, when the will of the people has been decreed at the ballot-box, that even there the will of the people has been given effect to. That being so, I say, let us not take a leap in the dark. We are a free people, we have a free Constitution, and we are doing well; and therefore, in my opinion, we should leave well alone and not make any dangerous experiments.

Mr. PIRANI.—I did not intend to take part in this debate, and should not have risen had it not been for a remark about myself which fell from the Premier. I might say that I support the principle of this Bill, and intend to vote for the second reading. There was a remark made by the Premier just now in reference to my refusing a "pair" on the Elective Executive Bill. I may say that the Premier asked me personally to pair with Mr. Mackintosh, and I declined to pair for the reason, as I told him at the time, that I wanted to have a division on the Bill, and that I intended to call for it. That was the only reason; and I think I was quite within my rights in refusing that pair, and that it was rather out of place for the Premier to bring the matter up in the House. I had no intention of bringing up the matter. He also mentioned that there was considerable whipping on the part of those in support of the Bill I refer to. I can tell him that not one single vote was asked for on that Bill, either by the mover or by those who supported him. The Premier gave as an instance in support of his statement that telegrams had been sent asking for pairs. Now, it will surprise him very much to know there was no telegram sent until the day after the division. The telegram he refers to was sent the day after the division, and was an

Mr. Seddon

inquiry, of a member who had been paired by the Government, whether he had authorised the pair. That was all that was done; and I think the Premier himself, in attacking this Elective Executive Bill and the Bill before the House, is making a mountain out of a molehill. It seems to me that if he took less notice of what appeared in the Conservative Press it would be a great deal better for his own peace of mind, and a great deal easier for the Government supporters. We know very well that the Conservative Press are only too anxious to make a mountain out of every little thing of this sort that is brought up in the House. That is their game and their amusement. But I say those laugh best who laugh last. The Government are able to laugh, at any rate, having a majority supporting them on those benches, and they ought therefore to regard any criticism of that sort as too puerile for their consideration.

Mr. R. McKENZIE.—Sir, in justice to the honourable gentleman who has moved the second reading of this Bill in such an able and capable manner, I intend to take up the time of the House for six or seven minutes, in order that he may be able to make a straight-out reply after the supper adjournment. The honourable gentleman can then deal with the question properly, and without interruption. Now, Sir, I could not understand the speech of the honourable member for Palmerston. It was a bit of a mystery to me. I thought he went beyond the limits of fair debate in referring to a debate on a former occasion in this House. I do not think he was justified in referring to that subject: but it did not matter to me whether he was justified in doing so or not. I found that he wanted a dig at the Premier, or the Ministry, in some shape or form, and I thought it best to give him sufficient rope to hang himself. Instead of taking up the position which I was prepared to do—and which, perhaps, I should have done—by raising a point of order, I refrained from interrupting him, and, as I have said already, I thought it best to leave the honourable gentleman alone. I am speaking on this question at a disadvantage. I was not present in the House when the honourable gentleman made his speech in moving the second reading, and I only listened a little time when the Premier was speaking against it. However, I had the pleasure of being present when the Hon. Mr. Reeves made an eloquent speech—probably one of the ablest speeches that have been made this session. I was present also when the honourable member for Bruce made his able speech on this Bill, so that I have quite sufficient to go upon for the next five or six minutes. Now, Sir, I would like to ask the honourable gentleman who is bringing the Bill forward if it is really his own Bill, because my own conviction is that it is not his Bill at all, but the Bill of one of a party of malcontents who have been in Parliament for the last twenty years. The honourable gentleman is not a malcontent, nor is he discontented. By no means. As far as I can judge this is a

Bill promoted by the senior member for Wellington City.

An Hon. MEMBER.—No.

Mr. R. McKENZIE.—I say Yes, or, at least, I think it is.

An Hon. MEMBER.—No.

Mr. R. McKENZIE.—At any rate, the ideas contained in this Bill have been instilled into the honourable member for Inangahua by an older head than his own. It is an old acquaintance of mine. It is a twin-brother to the Bill we had before the House the other night—I refer to the Elective Executive Bill,—and either of these Bills would be a bad thing for any English colony: in fact, they will never come into force while we are connected with the English Crown. They may do very well in Switzerland—and no doubt they do fairly well there. Well, Sir, I heard this Bill and its twin-brother debated by a much abler and more eloquent gentleman, on this subject, than any one who has spoken on this measure to-night except the Minister of Education, who seems to have the whole subject at his fingers' ends.

An Hon. MEMBER.—You were not here to hear the debate before.

Mr. R. McKENZIE.—The honourable gentleman says I was not here when this question came up in a previous year. I did not say that I heard it debated here. I heard it debated outside this House.

An Hon. MEMBER.—In the lobby?

Mr. R. McKENZIE.—No, Sir, not in the lobby. I heard it debated outside this House altogether.

An Hon. MEMBER.—Where?

Mr. R. McKENZIE.—On the public platforms in this colony, and that is more than can be said by the honourable member, for I am sure he never heard of the Bill before to-night. That being so, it is quite out of the course of things for a novice to get up in this House and discuss a Bill of this importance, which he has never heard anything at all about. He debated it in such a style that any schoolboy in a debating society could have expressed much better and sounder opinions than the honourable member did. Honourable gentlemen are surprised, apparently, at my statement that I heard it debated outside this House. Well, I heard it debated on the public platforms with great ability and eloquence, and a good deal of force. I cannot say I heard anything forcible said in favour of it to-night. I heard something said against it with force and eloquence, but nothing in its favour. Now I am coming to the honourable member for Selwyn. As I see he is not here, I will not refer very much to him. However, I look upon him as a malcontent, and he always seems to be willing to give any members who have measures of this sort a shove along. His great objection to the present system is that he has been forty-one years in Parliament and has never yet got into a Ministry, and he is like a drowning man clutching at a straw, and avails himself of the very first opportunity of getting landed in some position of power. There is no doubt that the same thing applies

to the senior member for Wellington City, though in a different and less degree. He is undoubtedly a man of great ability. We all admit that he is among the men of the greatest ability in this House. But he is detached from party, although there is a good deal of friendship between him and the other side of the House. He cannot come with the party on this side of the House, and he cannot get all he wants on the other side of the House; consequently he promotes this Bill, with the intention of trying to make a party of his own. That is the reason why the Bill is brought before this House, and I do hope that the Liberals of this colony will realise the position. I feel satisfied that the Liberal constituencies will never have anything of this kind. They have never yet asked for a measure of this kind. The members who have been returned as Liberal members may stultify themselves to a certain extent, and allow themselves to be got at unwittingly by the senior member for Wellington City, who is a very able man, and who can no doubt be very persuasive, and will endeavour to make political capital in this House of an undecided issue like this. I am perfectly well satisfied, however, that the Liberal constituencies of this colony will not listen to anything of this sort. All questions are referred to them every three years. My young friend who brought the Bill forward, and who is presumably the promoter of it, does want it, I am quite certain. Sir, his greatest grievance is indicated when he says, "Let New Zealand be governed by the New-Zealanders." Well, I have no objection to that, especially if the New-Zealanders he refers to were all like the honourable member for Inangahua. I should fall in with that idea at once, for in that case I know it would be well governed indeed. I think the young New-Zealanders cannot yet be trusted with the government of the colony, because they are not sufficiently old. Therefore I think they will do well to trust their political fathers a few years longer.

11.0. Mr. COLLINS.—Sir, I should scarcely like this matter to go to a division without very briefly expressing my views upon it. I might, first of all, suggest that there is a growing tendency to introduce, in discussing matters of this kind, a certain amount of acrimony, which, I think, might very well be dispensed with; and, moreover, I think it is scarcely fair that one should be unable to express one's candid opinion on any question without being subjected to imputations of motive or accusations of being false to one's convictions. Now, Sir, I do not doubt that when I have finished speaking I shall be told what I was told before—that I have simply been endeavouring to justify myself with my constituents, and endeavouring to justify a departure from a promise made previous to my election. That has been said before; but in this matter, as upon the other matter, I made no promise to my constituents. I can discuss this matter on its intrinsic merits. There are many reasons why I should feel disposed to support the Referendum, but, even if I were

disposed to support it as a principle, I could scarcely support it as embodied in this present measure. I should like to compliment the honourable gentleman who introduced the Bill for his introductory speech; it was temperate, and, from his particular standpoint, thoroughly logical; but, nevertheless, when I come to refer to the Bill itself there is very much in it to which I take exception. The honourable gentleman suggested that the introduction of the reform contained in this Bill would act as a preventive of hasty legislation. I am under the impression that those who argue in favour of this Bill are not hopeful of checking hasty legislation, but are really hopeful of encouraging legislation that has already received a check; and in their minds the hope is that the tendency will act in the opposite direction to that of checking hasty legislation. Then, it was suggested as another reason why certain matters should be relegated to the people by Referendum that at an election of members, who are supposed to voice the will of the people by whom they are sent to this House, many feelings are given rise to which are to be deplored. It was said that at election-times people are stirred by party questions and by deep religious feelings. And yet this particular Bill would probably intensify the feelings at election-times by adding to the difficulties of the election of a member the consideration of matters which would be sent down to the people, upon which they would have to express their opinion. It has already been pointed out that the vote, under clause 5, may take place on the same day as a general election or a licensing election. I think this clause in itself is sufficient to condemn the Bill. That at the time when the people are excited, as at an election, when they are divided into distinct parties, and sometimes into many distinct camps—that at such a time they should be called upon to express a judicial opinion with regard to some measure appears to me to be expecting them to do something that could not be done well, but would be sure to be done in a manner prejudicial to the interests of the country. I venture to suggest that at election-time a man is not in that frame of mind best calculated to give an impartial opinion upon a legislative enactment. However he may be qualified to express an opinion as to the election of a member, he is not in a fit condition at a time of election to adequately consider a measure in all its details. Besides all this, there are certainly complexities with regard to the measure which ought to be referred to. In the first place, how are the people to be made acquainted with all the details of a measure? Running over the Bills before me, I find many comprising a considerable number of pages—some running into hundreds of clauses. Now, is every elector whose vote is to be recorded to be supplied with a draft copy of the Bill? Is every person adequately to consider every clause of a Bill, and is every person to be considered fitted to express an opinion on every clause of a Bill on which his expression of opinion is to be given? I

Mr. Collins

think this matter should receive the attention of the mover of the Bill. I want to know whether all electors are to be supplied with copies of a measure upon which they are to express their opinion. If, at times of election, there are burning questions and religious differences, the constituencies are not in such a condition as to give calm deliberation to important measures. How are we to expect our Legislature to be improved by asking them to express an opinion at such a time? Then, we can never tell when an election may occur. And, furthermore, if an opinion is to be expressed at the time of a licensing election, we should have an unfair mixing-up of important questions. We should have the people required to express an impartial and judicial opinion at a time when their feelings are very largely excited. Then, there is another point. We should have the people practically at the mercy of those who are possessed of the means to travel through the country to take the platforms of the country and expound a measure to them. It would not be an impartial decision; it would be a distinctly partial and party decision of the intensest character. We should simply have the country stumped by those who could afford to do so, or who would have an interest in a particular measure; it would be influenced by those people, and the measure more or less would be represented, or misrepresented I should say, in order to influence the vote of the people with regard to it. There is another reason why I oppose the Bill as it stands. Under this Bill a matter is not to be referred to the people until it has been passed by this House and rejected by the Legislative Council. I am under the impression that the feeling is much stronger for a reform of the Legislative Council than for the Referendum. The country has never expressed any distinct opinion with regard to the Referendum, but a very distinct opinion has from time to time been expressed with regard to the reform of the Legislative Council. If this measure were passed, then all reason for reforming the Legislative Council would be done away with. It would be at once said, "There is no reason why we should trouble any further to reform the Legislative Council; if they do not choose to pass measures, we simply have to refer them to the body of the people." Then, if this is to be the means of bringing on to the statute-book of the country an enactment rejected by the Legislative Council, further temptations will be held out to the Legislative Council to reject important measures. If they reject important measures now, they know full well they will come back to the House, and this House may, if it chooses, refer them to the country. But if this Bill is passed the Legislative Council may, with a certain degree of impunity, reject any measure it pleases, and refuse to accept the onus of passing it, with the assertion, "What does it matter? You will refer it to the people. Let it be referred to them, and let them give an opinion upon it." This country has made very considerable progress with the institutions it already has; they

have been well tried, and are now working tolerably well, and with splendid results. I think the efforts of the House should be rather to purify and rather to amend and rather to improve the institutions we already have than further to add to them. This appears to me to be the direction in which we should move. Illustrations have been advanced during the course of the debate and a great deal has been said with regard to the important country—the progressive country—of Switzerland. But, Sir, I am quite convinced, if honourable members had been in Switzerland, if they knew that country personally, and not merely from books, they would know full well that the ordinary Swiss artisan does not enjoy that measure of liberty, that personal freedom, which every artisan enjoys in this country. It is all very well to speak of the progressive character of Switzerland. We will admit Switzerland is progressive, and has made great advances; but all this may be explained without the Referendum. If Switzerland be in any respect in advance of Continental countries at this time we may justly say it is because of the character of the distribution of land, of her educational system, and her pronounced local self-government. But these have nothing whatever to do with the Referendum. Our resolve should be to follow her example in these respects—to obtain an equal distribution of land, to still further improve our educational system, to still further advance local self-government; and by these means we shall bring about national progress and improvement in New Zealand: and we can do that without still further adding to the complications of the machinery by which our laws are placed on our statute-book. Up to the present I have heard no really sound reason why we should refer measures of legislation to the people. Furthermore, if there is to be a Referendum Bill at all, I should require a Bill of much wider and more far-reaching character than this. This is not a Referendum Bill in the true sense of the word, and I do not think it would attain the objects the mover has in his mind. Complimenting him, as I do, on the bold and courageous and able speech he made, nevertheless I think it might have been used to a greater advantage and better purpose.

Mr. HOGG.—I think I may join with the last speaker in complimenting the honourable member who introduced the Bill upon the tact he has displayed, on the moderate character of the language he has used, and upon the ingenuity of the arguments he has employed in introducing a measure of this character. It is one of a series of measures brought before this House during the present session more with a view to stirring up debate, in my opinion, than to leading to anything of a practical character. The Referendum Bill, like the Elective Executive Bill, is a measure that certainly has not been fairly before the country. As far as I am aware, during the last general election few, if any, members of the House ever introduced the idea of an elective Executive or of a Referendum measure to their constituents; and, seeing

the important bearing a measure of this kind may have on the political destinies of the colony, I think it is undesirable that without serious consideration we should attempt to introduce anything of the kind into our practical legislation. The question arises, Are the people dissatisfied with our present system of government? That really lies at the root of the whole subject. Have we got representative government now ruling the destinies of New Zealand? Are this House and the Ministry of the day in accord with the people? Is the country being governed in a right way, or is it being misgoverned? If it could be shown for a moment that the people are dissatisfied, or that we in this colony are in the same position as they are in some of the Australian Colonies, or in some of the countries in the Old World, then there might be some reason for introducing this kind of legislation. But I think the people are well satisfied with the quality of the government they now possess, and the introduction of measures of this kind simply signifies, in my opinion, an undesirable waste of time. The measure itself is altogether inopportune. As far as I am aware, the people of New Zealand are perfectly satisfied with the present system of representative government. It is said that our system is defective. Well, it would be a very difficult thing to invent or to propound any system that would be perfect. We are endeavouring from time to time to improve not only the quality of our legislation, but also to improve our representative institutions; but I think, if we were to go so far as to imitate the Swiss Federation by introducing a measure of this character we should be making a very dangerous leap in the dark. If reforms of a permanent character are to be attained they must be attained by slow and easy steps. All history proves that if reforms in the Constitution of a country are to be of a permanent, useful, and beneficial character, they must be attained by slow degrees. Such reforms are the product of slow growth. That has been the history of the British Constitution for ages. Every reform is achieved only after a series of slow stages, and in advancing as far as this Referendum we should be advancing, in my opinion, a little bit too far. It has been said that the object of this Bill is to enable the people to rule. Well, I should like to know, in reply, whether the people do not rule now, and, if they do not, I should like to know who does rule. Who is the ruler in New Zealand if it is not ruled by its people? I certainly say that it is a reflection upon the intelligence, the integrity, and the honour of members of this House to say that the people do not rule through their representatives. If we have any authority, and have been intrusted by the people with the right to legislate, it must be used for the people; and therefore the people do rule through their representatives; and to proceed a little further, do not the representatives rule through the Ministry of the day? If the Ministry are in the confidence of the representatives, if they are carrying out the wishes

of the majority of this House, then certainly it is not simply the Ministry who rule, but the representatives who rule, and behind those representatives we have the people themselves. So that I think that argument falls to the ground. Then, again, it is denied that we have representative government in New Zealand. If we have not representative government here I should like to know what kind of government we have got. Is it not a grave reflection on the electors of the colony, with their free institutions, with the fact that within the last two or three years we have been able, after a terrific struggle in this very House, to obtain a universal franchise such as has not yet been obtained in any other British dependency—is it not a reflection upon the whole of the electors of the colony to say that after having obtained this amount of political freedom they are not in possession of representative institutions? I should like to ask, if we have not a representative government, how is representative government ever going to be obtained?

An Hon. MEMBER.—By the Hare system.

Mr. HOGG.—The honourable member says, "By the Hare system." Well, I should like to know how many electors in New Zealand know anything about this Hare system, or how many have taken any interest in it, or have been instructed with regard to its merits. I should like to know how often that Hare system has been debated at a general election—how often it has been discussed by any solitary member of this House, or by any member who ever sat in this Chamber. I should like to know whether that Hare system has ever been explained by the honourable gentleman to his constituents; whether he believes they are conversant with it, and whether the principle has been debated in the leading columns of the Press. As far as the popular mind is concerned, very little is known about this Hare system. That system has been before the minds of political enthusiasts for a very long time. I do not know how long it is since it was first propounded, but it is a long time. I believe its author is no longer in existence, but his books are in the library, and are not often perused. How many honourable members ever take the trouble even to look up the rudiments of the Hare system? I have heard it referred to from time to time, but it is used more as a question for debate, more as a kind of mental exercise, than as anything else. It seems that when nothing else can be got hold of with which to waste a considerable amount of time the Hare system is introduced, just like a box of chess, for the purpose of getting an interesting game now and again. It seems to me to be discussed with that object rather than with any other. So far as I remember, the Hare system was propounded over a quarter of a century ago, and it has not yet entered within the province of practical politics. That does not say much for the Hare system. It is not by any means anything new, but it is one of those things that are found wandering about looking for a master, and with no one to take its hand. When people cannot find anything else to talk

about they talk about representative government. These questions are often brought forward as a mere blind—as a means of throwing dust in the eyes of the people. In my opinion, this Hare system is brought out very often simply to divert public attention from those problems which concern them very intimately—problems of great practical importance; problems with regard to land and finance. These are the things which stand in the forefront of practical politics, and these are the things that we should deal with as practical politicians. Has any one heard of the people asking for this Referendum? I certainly admit that the honourable member for Inangahua is sincere, and that there are a number of honourable members in this House, and some who are absent, who are sincere on the question. The senior member for Wellington City would be. He is full of—I do not like to designate them "fads," because theorists are often useful in their way, but we know that he is crammed full of "fads" of this kind, and that accounts for the fact that, though the honourable member has been for many years a representative of the people, and has had his opportunities for usefulness multiplied, since he has not been merely a member of the House but an occupant of the Treasury benches, yet he has effected very few good practical reforms. He has certainly introduced some measures that are now on the statute-book—measures which I have no hesitation in denouncing, such, for instance, as the Hospitals and Charitable Institutions Act, which has inflicted a poor-rate on New Zealand under which the best settlers are groaning at the present time. He has introduced measures, in my opinion, of a most pernicious character; but when one comes to look for really good, sound, practical legislation, what has that honourable gentleman done? He is always talking about the New Liberals. He wants something new continually, and is ever clamouring for some novelty—just like a spoiled child who wants a new musical instrument, and when he gets it inserted within his jaws he does not know how to use it. The fact is that the senior member for Wellington City is wholly impracticable. We have heard that said of a member of this House whom the whole House honours; but I say the honourable the senior member for Wellington City is much more impracticable than that honourable gentleman. The senior member for Wellington City is just full of "fads"; and I have no doubt he would be a sincere supporter of the Hare system and of the Referendum. I hope, however, that members of this House—or, at any rate, a great majority of them—will not regard this measure seriously. It has been a very good thing for discussion, but, even with regard to the discussion which has taken place this evening, we can see that it has resulted in many empty benches, and many of those benches have been empty throughout the evening. Ever since the discussion commenced one could see that very little interest indeed is taken in this Referendum. Well, then, the honourable member for Inangahua

Mr. Hogg

mentioned the names of some gentlemen in the other colonies with whom I happen to be acquainted. There were Sir Graham Berry, Mr. Deacon, Mr. Best, and certain other Victorian celebrities who, he said, have highly recommended the Referendum. Well, without casting any great slight upon those gentlemen, I think I may say that they can fairly be regarded as played-out politicians—obsolete politicians: that is the proper term. These gentlemen are very fond of introducing anything which will be likely in the slightest degree to bring their names again into prominence, since their names have gone down, and, I believe, have gone down for ever. What has happened to the Colony of Victoria—the colony with which they are identified? What has been their system of government, or, rather, of misgovernment, I should say? They have in that colony for years past been suffering from a boom fever and railway mismanagement. I do not think the Referendum would have done much practical good in that colony, because I believe, if you were to refer the question of borrowing to the people in some of these colonies to-morrow, they would give their vote in favour of borrowing.

An Hon. MEMBER.—They would do so here.

Mr. HOGG.—Yes, I believe they would do so in New Zealand; but I say it is the duty of the representatives to lead, and not to follow. It is the duty of the representatives to instruct and educate and lead their own constituents. If they find that their constituents are mistaken, if they find that they are misled by specious arguments, if they find public opinion is going wrong, then the men who ought to sound the keynote are the men who represent the interests of the constituents. They are the men who should meet the people on the public platform and show them that they are wrong, and, if they have not the courage to meet them at public meetings and express their own opinions, they are not fit to occupy the position of representatives. What is the true position of a representative? He is not a mere reflection of his constituents. He ought to be anxious to reflect himself upon the minds of the country. The most intelligent minds may not be in a majority; they may be even in a feeble minority; but still we know very well that public opinion is continually changing, and our effort should be to make public opinion change in the proper direction. I admire the politician who can come forward on the platform to fight a hostile audience opposed to his views, and who has the courage to bring forward his best arguments to convert his audience and show them where they are wrong. That can be done through free speech, and it can be done much better than under a Referendum system. Under the Referendum system the people may be swayed in various ways to give their vote on any question at issue. I say that questions should not be referred, as is proposed in this measure, to the entire body of the people. We have in New Zealand political freedom at the present time, and I think that is a kind

of freedom we are bound to protect. We in New Zealand are greatly in advance of any other British dependency. We have given to the people an amount of political freedom that they do not possess in any other part of the world—either in America or anywhere else. We have granted a universal franchise, by extending that franchise to women. I think, therefore, that the representatives of the people should be intrusted with the legislation of the country. I have said that we have given to the people of this colony a large amount of political freedom; and if that political freedom can be improved in any way I shall be only too glad to assist in that direction, but I do not see how it can be effected at the present time, and I am certain it cannot be done either by an elective Executive or by the Referendum. It was at one time the cry in New Zealand that the majority must rule. Now, at the present time the majority does rule, because at the general elections the representatives of the people were elected on the universal-suffrage principle. Then, the people have a right to catechize their members, and to demand that their wishes shall be carried out in Parliament. Now that the people have obtained this right, will it be contended for a moment that the majority does not rule? I maintain, Sir, that the majority does rule, and rules most effectually in New Zealand, and we have no longer to contend for the political rights of the people, as we had until a few years ago. We have a majority ruling in this country now, and, if there is any one to be protected, certainly it is not the majority. The majority has the power, and can protect itself; but what we have to protect in New Zealand at the present time, as in other countries constituted like New Zealand, is the minority. It may be that the minority is feeble, but it may be an intelligent minority. It may be a minority possessing property. It may be a minority against which the whole strength of the majority is arrayed; and I say, in a spirit of justice, it is a duty of the representatives of the people to defend the ordinary rights and privileges of that minority. They should stand before their constituents and say, "Because the minority happens to be small and feeble, we will not allow any one to trample it underfoot. We are going to protect the weak against the strong." I believe, if they do that, the right will always prevail, so long as a representative is doing what he considers to be right and according to his own convictions, and does nothing whatever to please merely for the time being. As I have said, I admire the man who can stand in front of his constituents at a public meeting, and who, although he may be received with hisses and groans, will await his opportunity, and when he obtains silence will raise his voice and use every effort, by fair and reasonable argument, to convince his audience that what they contemplate will be a severe wrong to the community. I say such a man as that is doing a wonderful work, not merely for the people who are living now, but for posterity, because that man's work will live afterwards. The

greatest reformers of all time have been men who have stood against the majority, and who have not been afraid to do what was right in standing up for the liberties of the world. But the Referendum will not do that. The Referendum means simply bowing down to the majority, whether that majority is right or wrong. If we are going to set up a tribunal of this character, if important measures are to be submitted to the country for its approval, if members of this House choose to subjugate their reason, what is the position of a representative? He may be entirely opposed to some of the measures which are sent before his constituents and the country, and afterwards carried into operation. What follows? Would any man having any sense of true dignity agree to longer occupy a seat in this House under those circumstances? I think he would soon vacate his position, because he would be compelled to accept legislation repugnant to him. If he had the spirit of a man he would no longer consent to occupy a false position in this House. I say we have no right to refer these things to the people. We have a right to use our own judgment, and if we find that our judgment and views are not in accord with the views of the majority of our constituents, then it is for our constituents to adopt the proper remedy, which they can do when the general election takes place. If they find that their representatives are not voting in accordance with their wishes, nor carrying out their views, by supporting the legislation of which they approve, then, I say, the constituents should take action themselves. But to say that you should reduce the members of this House to mere automata—to make them something like Chinese praying-machines, performing mental work by a mechanical process—is absurd. It would be making members of this House something like that black-faced man in the merry-go-round here, who has to turn a handle to produce the music. It would be reducing them to automata, to be simply moved by their constituents; and to that humiliating position I hope no honourable member will submit. Even in municipal bodies we have not got representatives of that character. We have men who are not afraid to advance their opinions boldly, and to lead and not be led. I have just been reminded of one thing, and that is that, in all probability, if the Referendum had been applied we should not now be in possession of the universal franchise. I question very much whether a majority of the male electors of New Zealand would have been in favour of conferring the franchise on the women of the country. But I say that it has been carried out most advantageously to our legislation, and I am pleased to find that the most eminent men in New Zealand at the present time admit that the universal franchise has proved an immense success, and that it is likely to be copied in other parts of the world. That is one thing I believe would not have been carried into existence, at any rate for a considerable time, if we had had to

Mr. Hogg

apply the Referendum. There are other things that might be of very great advantage to the country—other reforms, such as the reforms made in the incidence of taxation. I question very much whether the land-tax would have been carried into law if we had applied the Referendum. It is quite possible that the matter would have been worked up to such an extent by the opponents of the land-tax that there would have been a majority against it. But, still, the Government of the country, backed up by the representatives of the people, have altered the system of taxation, and that experiment has been found to be one of the most useful character. Sir, I hope this Referendum system will not be allowed to pass into law at least for a considerable time to come.

Mr. PERE.—Sir, I do not propose to take up much time on this Bill. I listened to the speech of the honourable member for Inangahua, and I think the Bill he has introduced will bring calamity and evil on the Maori people, because I think, if any question of principle or law is referred to the people, the Natives will suffer by it. There are outside this House, in the country, people who have no stake in the country, and I have no doubt the Natives would be influenced by those people if this Bill were passed into law. And the probability would be that they would pass measures into law to take the land from the property-holders. Honourable members are aware that at the present time there are large property-holders in the country; and, if this Bill were passed, the time would come when the lands of these large property-holders would be taken in the interests of the Government and the colony. In order to put a stop to this demand for land, and to save these properties from being taken, I think the only way would be to keep people from marrying. I am aware, however, that the time will come when twenty acres will be considered a very large property. It has been a great hardship to the Maori people, and I think it is a great hardship to many people, that the power of legislating and making laws should be confined only to members. If this Bill had been passed and had become a law, where would have been the Bank of New Zealand now? The probability is that many people would have been bankrupts, but, owing to the action of the Government, the crisis in connection with the Bank of New Zealand was brought to a successful termination. Had that matter been referred to the country, by the time it came back to this House many people would have been ruined. I think that, when members have been elected to this House to represent different electorates, it is for those members to go and explain matters to their constituents. I contend, Sir, that if matters were referred to outsiders some people would go and try to bribe people over; because there are always some people outside who would be very easily influenced by others. If it is the intention of this House to pass this Bill into law I would ask the House not to make it apply to the

Maori people. I feel very doubtful about these apparently shadowy Bills. They are like shadows, especially so in having been placed above my Bill. These shadowy Bills are simply killing mine, and I consider my Bill is a very important one, inasmuch as it affects all the people in New Zealand. I think some arrangement should be made that Bills of this kind should be struck off the Order Paper, and I also think that the time of speaking should be limited to a quarter of an hour, because the honourable member who spoke before me took up nearly an hour in his speech. I have nothing more to say in regard to the Bill.

Mr. STEVENS.—Sir, it was not my intention to speak on the Bill under discussion, but I think it my duty, inasmuch as the honourable member for the Eastern Maori District has expressed an opinion on the Referendum, to express an opinion also, and for two reasons: First, that we were both born on the same soil; and I wish to offer him that meed of praise to which I believe every honourable gentleman is entitled who makes his first effort in this House. Now, Sir, the speech of the honourable member has been listened to with a very great deal of interest, and with not a little mirth. Why have honourable members considered that speech interesting? Because it has been interpreted into English by a gentleman who has also made his maiden effort as an interpreter to the House, and, as I am somewhat qualified to express an opinion on that subject, I say it reflects very great credit upon him. With respect to the question under discussion, I consider that we have the most perfect Referendum to-day that we can desire. I discussed this question many years ago with the late John Ballance in this way. I was under the impression that we should not allow this country to exist under what I conceived to be conditions of political turmoil, and my impression at that time was that we should have quinquennial Parliaments instead of triennial Parliaments. My opinion is that the triennial Parliaments have proved that the people do not get out of touch with their representatives. But we have retained the triennial Parliaments, and we have our constituencies now in the easiest, most perfect touch with ourselves. In this respect I think matters have been improved since the period of quinquennial Parliaments. The Government have to deal with many political questions, and if their action on any one of these political questions is not accepted by this House the Government are immediately relegated to the people, and the people then say, "We approve," or, "We disapprove of your action." Such being the case, I think we are making a very grave and a very great mistake if we are going to interfere with that great Liberal principle which has been laid down—that is, that the people shall be represented by a majority of the people. In this House we are now the representatives of the majority of the people, and we are in the closest possible touch with them. It is not necessarily required that Parliament should expire by effluxion of time in order that any

question may be referred to the people. Any matter can be referred to the people as often as the necessities of the case require it; and, such being the case, I think the Bill introduced by the honourable gentleman is not required. I have the very greatest respect for him, and I have the same respect for him, as for the last speaker, because he is a son of the same soil to which I belong—he is a son of New Zealand. We are New-Zealanders, and I say New Zealand should be for the New-Zealanders, and we should exercise that power which the people of New Zealand have placed in our hands with judgment and discretion. I contend that this country will prosper if we can do one thing—namely, give it a long period of political rest. The great objection in the minds of most of the thinking men of this colony is that, so far as legislation is concerned, we have too much legislation and too little practicability, and I do say that this colony is yearning and is anxious for a long political rest. If we could devote our time and attention to the consolidation of our existing laws, and put them into such a form that they would be understood by the people, then we should have less political strife, less political difficulty, than we have at present. When a man is brought before a Court of law, whether he is literate or illiterate, if he is ignorant of the law, that is no plea in defence. Every man is supposed to know the law, and we ought to legislate so that the people will be able to understand the laws. I maintain that we have a Constitution that does not exist in other countries, so far as Liberalism is concerned; and, such being the case, I do hope that this House will pause and be careful before it lends itself to placing upon the statute-book of this colony any laws for the alteration of our Constitution, or any further laws beyond those we have at present; otherwise we shall have in this colony "confusion worse confounded." I say that no better or purer Liberalism can be given to a colony than the law under which we represent the people at the present moment. That is my opinion. I give every credit to the honourable member who has introduced this Bill, but I do hope honourable members will agree with me that, although we are now living in an electrical age, we did live in a stone age. Now, however, we are living in an electrical age, and it is necessary that we should advance at the rate that electricity will provide for us; but to make laws by electricity is a mistake. I am speaking metaphorically; but if these great reforms are to take place which are desired by the people

12.0. we must not legislate hurriedly. Sir, when there are such drastic reforms proposed, I say the proper place to introduce and enunciate them is upon the public platform, on the hustings, and there take the voice of the people upon the subject, and we ought not to force on this House and on the public that which they have not yet ripened their minds for. I do hope that my honourable friend, for whom I have a great personal and I may say political respect, only intended to, introduce this ques-

tion for the purpose of enabling the public of this colony to discuss it, to consider it, and between now and the next general election to say that they have considered the matter fairly and intelligently as to whether it is a necessity or not; and after the considerable discussion which has been given to it to-night I think that ought to satisfy the honourable gentleman who has introduced the Bill—that it will have satisfied him in so far as it is laid fairly and clearly before the public of this colony through the Press; and at the next general election this will be probably one of the points of policy—as to whether the candidates will support the Referendum or will not support it. But if the honourable gentleman hopes to carry the second reading of the Bill which he has introduced by my vote I regret it, because of the great personal friendship I have for him, as I shall have to vote in the opposite lobby.

Mr. HEKE.—I must say that I quite bear out the remark made by the Native member for the East Coast, that this Bill would have a disastrous effect upon the Natives; although I believe in the principle of the Bill—that is, under a condition to this effect: that any matter or legislation that was intended to affect the Natives or Native property would be put to the vote of the Maori people alone. Then, I must say, I would support the measure. There are several people who have no stake in the country, whom we call the unemployed.

Mr. O'REGAN.—But they have a stake.

Mr. HEKE.—There are others who are prejudiced against the Native cause, and it would be only proper that all questions affecting the Natives should be put to the Native vote only. I will support the second reading if a clause to that effect is inserted in the Bill. This will enable him to test the feeling of the House in Committee, should it pass the second reading. We have in the Land for Settlements Bill the eternal-lease system—999 years. If the clause I have suggested to the honourable member for Inangahua be adopted as part of the Bill, I will urge this House, when the proper time comes, to allow the clause to remain in force for fifty years. The repealing of such a clause as that should be put to the Natives, in so far as it relates to the property of Natives.

Mr. O'REGAN.—Sir, there is one fact to me very evident after the debate we have just listened to—that there is a great deal more in the principle of the Referendum than its opponents would have the House believe. When we see the ablest opponents of the Bill making such strenuous protests against it we must come to the conclusion that there is something in it. I regret very much that the honourable member for Wellington Suburbs is not in his place, as I had a few words to say for that gentleman's special delectation. Evidently he has not read the 2nd clause of the Bill, to which he made such strong reference. He spoke with special regard to this clause, but showed either that he had not read it or that he had skipped over every other line of it. That clause is the crucial point of the Bill. The honourable gentleman told us it was provided that all

measures rejected by the Upper House should be referred to the people, which is totally incorrect. The clause simply means this: that when both Houses shall have passed a resolution in favour of submitting a measure to the vote of the electors it shall be done; or when the House of Representatives shall pass a resolution referring any measure that has been twice passed by the House, and twice rejected by the Upper House, to the vote of the electors, then such reference shall be made. The honourable gentleman was very careful indeed to draw a red-herring across the scent in regard to this clause. He also referred to the members of this House as the cream of the intellect of this country. I do not wish to say anything disparaging of the gentlemen around me, but I am of opinion that there are plenty of men in the colony who are quite as good as the members of this House. It is no disparagement at all to honourable members to say so. I should be very sorry to say that the seventy-four men who are supposed to represent the colony at the present time, and who may not be here next Parliament, represent the cream of the colony for the time being. The honourable gentleman was also incorrect in saying that when this Bill passed I expected the millennium to come upon the world. I expect nothing of the kind, and made no remarks to lead to such an extravagant conclusion. The honourable member for Bruce contended very strongly that under our present system of election we had the Referendum. It may be conceded we have a kind of method of securing the popular verdict; but the honourable gentleman overlooked the point that under the Referendum the personal element that attaches to elections under the present system will be totally eliminated,—which, of course, makes all the difference. He overlooked that fact, and it led him astray. Then, the Minister of Education made a very able speech from his own point of view; but I am certainly surprised that one who has such a high status, who enjoys such a high reputation as a debater, should have made so hollow a speech as we listened to from him this evening. For instance, he said the Referendum means legislation without discussion. Now, I should like to know what is the character of a great deal of the legislation passed through this House, and which ultimately finds its way to the statute-book. What discussion have we had on the Bills that have already passed this session? Honourable members assume that the Land for Settlements Bill has the approval of a large section—of a majority of the electors. Now, under our present system of election we have no guarantee that such is at all the case: in fact, the question has never been put before the electors. I might as well say that, because I am a single-taxer, and happen to represent the District of Inangahua, the majority of the people in that part of the country are single-taxers. I do not wish, Sir, to make such a ridiculous assertion as that. In reality the land-for-settlement question has been continually before the country in conjunction with

Mr. Stevens

other issues. The electors voted for the candidates whom they liked the best, and the candidates who received the majorities were returned to this House not merely because of their views on the Land for Settlements Bill. All that we are really able with certainty to conclude is that these members have been returned, and that amongst a number of other subjects they were supporters of the principle of purchasing land for settlement; just in the same way that I was returned to the House, not because I am a believer in Henry George's theory, but for the reason that prejudice against that theory did not outweigh other considerations. Under our present system it is not absolutely necessary to discuss every measure which is put on the statute-book. The honourable gentleman told us, first of all, that the electors of the colony are not competent to decide upon questions that may be submitted to us. He said they were not sufficiently educated; but, if they are not sufficiently educated to decide on the justice or injustice of certain principles, how can he tell us they are sufficiently educated to return members to the House? Yet, in face of the fact that he considers their education too meagre to enable them to express an intelligent opinion on the questions of the day, he tells us that he is prepared to exchange the Referendum for the Upper House. Either he intended that to be a very poor compliment to the Upper House, whom he compares with the uneducated multitude, or in comparing gentlemen of culture and of known political experience with the multitude he paid a very high compliment indeed to the latter. I believe the ultimate effect of the Referendum will be to make the Upper House a superfluity. I, Sir, do not believe in a second Chamber at all. I regard the second Chamber as an excrescence. We have heard it said that second Chambers are a necessary check upon hasty legislation, and the strongest argument we have heard used in favour of them is that they have got a second Chamber in the Old Country. But I want to know whether it was devised for the purpose of checking hasty legislation. I assert that it was devised for nothing of the kind. The second Chamber in the Old Country, from which we have taken copy, is simply of fungous origin. Its origin, in fact, is somewhat obscure, and its special object is to put its foot, metaphorically speaking, on the throats of the people. There never was a measure designed for the good of the people that did not meet with the uncompromising opposition of the second Chamber in England. It is the same with all other countries which happen to possess a second Chamber. Look, for instance, at the action of the second Chamber in the United States. If there is any job to be perpetrated, or anything to pull the wires of the money kings, it is in that Chamber that it is attempted. An instance of this fact has lately been afforded by the opposition of the Senate to the reform of the nefarious McKinley Bill. And it is the same with other countries that have a second Chamber. We

simply have a second Chamber in this colony because it seems to be the correct thing to imitate the Old Country in everything. I do not believe in this pandering to national pride—this constant endeavour to stir up national sentiment against the Referendum because it happens to be of foreign origin. Would we exclude members from this House because they happened to be from a foreign nation? And would it be said that we are to hesitate to copy beneficent institutions simply because they have had their origin on the Continent of Europe? I have heard prominent leaders of the Liberal party advocate the system of old-age pensions, but for these we must go to foreign countries for a precedent. I say we should not hesitate to adopt a reform simply because we have to go outside any English-speaking country for a precedent. The Minister of Education also showed his inconsistency by saying that a member could not be elected to this House until he showed to the people that he was possessed of sufficient political education to entitle him to a seat in this House. Now, Sir, is that at all consistent with his assertion that the people are not sufficiently educated politically? How can they judge whether a man is fit to represent them unless they are sufficiently so educated? Did I not anticipate the honourable gentleman's argument in my opening speech when I pointed out that there would be objections to the Referendum because it would be said, as was said against manhood suffrage and against the female franchise, that the people were not sufficiently educated? But my contention was, and is, that you must first of all get people to educate themselves. The Referendum will tend to educate the people. The experience we have had of manhood and womanhood suffrage has taught us that the exercise of those rights has had the effect of politically educating the people. Another argument which the honourable member used—if I may call it an argument—is that the Referendum will be very expensive. Well, the honourable gentleman has simply got the choice between two alternatives—between putting a sufficient number of members in the Upper House at a costly price to carry the measures of the Government of the day and referring those questions to the determination of the people. Some time ago the present Ministry—or perhaps I should be more correct in saying the Balance Ministry—put twelve nominees into the Upper House. What does this mean? These twelve gentlemen receive £1,800 a year for their services; at the end of seven years their salaries will have come to £12,600; and the salaries of the whole number of members of the Upper House amounts to £6,900 a year, which in seven years totals up to the respectable sum of £48,300. Now, the honourable gentleman can judge, by comparing this cost with the expense entailed by the Referendum, whether he prefers to have a certain number of nominees of the Government placed in the Upper House, or whether he would refer to the people those questions which that House is now expected to

deliberate upon. If time permitted me, Sir, I could show that the far cheaper process is to refer these questions to the people. I quite agree with the honourable member for Riccarton that, if it can be shown that the principle of referring legislation to the people is a good principle, then no consideration of pounds shillings and pence should be allowed to stand in the way of giving effect to it. And now, Sir, I come to the Premier. The honourable gentleman practically travelled over the same ground as he did the other evening when he was speaking upon the Elective Executive Bill. I really expected to see tears dropping from the honourable gentleman's eyes when he was describing the hardships to which the women of Switzerland are subjected. But I fail to see that the honourable gentleman established his contention that the women of Switzerland worked hard because they have this particular form of government in that country. If the honourable gentleman will read "The Bitter Cry of Outcast London" he will find there parallels, I think, for anything that can be found in Switzerland in the way of hardship on the poor, and especially hardship on the women. I wonder if the honourable gentleman ever heard of such a book as Charles Kingsley's "Alton Locke," or if he has read "The Song of the Shirt," and whether he knows that "The Song of the Shirt"—those immortal verses of Thomas Hood—apply with the same force to England to-day as when they were written. Only to-day I was reading a book called "Social Problems," by Henry George, in which he describes from his own personal experiences what he saw in Ireland. He was travelling there in 1882, and while doing so he had the distinguished honour of being put in gaol. He describes the lonely meadows which he saw depopulated by rapacious landlords. He tells us how the unfortunate peasants were compelled to give way to beasts, and take refuge on the stony hillsides. There they endeavoured by hard toil to make homes. It was no infrequent sight to see women—the brave wives and daughters of these men—carrying seaweed on their backs to manure these barren hills, and for this seaweed the greedy landlord actually claimed rent. If the honourable gentleman wants to be the apologist of party government, and wishes to condemn the Referendum, he had better use some more forcible argument than we have heard to-night with regard to the social condition of the women of Switzerland. The honourable gentleman said, also, that candidates lead public opinion. I totally deny that. Politicians no more lead public opinion than do the newspapers. They are generally the reflex of public opinion for the time being. There is no politician in New Zealand who does lead the public mind. It is almost impossible for him to do so. But in the majority of cases—for the exception only proves the rule—politicians, like the newspapers, are the expression of public opinion. I remember when I made my *début* in the political arena some months ago I was taken in hand by an

experienced politician, who told me I was making a great mistake in endeavouring to go ahead of public opinion. He said that first of all you must go amongst the people, find out what they want, and act accordingly. He naively added, "It takes an old dog for a hard road." Then, the honourable gentleman accused me of reading a paper which he said had evidently been prepared for a debating society. Now, the extract to which he referred was read from a letter written by a gentleman travelling in Switzerland to a Melbourne newspaper. The Premier, judging from his remarks upon it, must have been listening very carelessly, because he did not understand the purport of what I read. With regard to the objection urged by one of the Maori members—Mr. Pere, the representative of the Eastern Maori District—that this measure would be oppressive on the Maori people, I have merely to say that there is no reason whatever why we should not insert a clause providing for a referendum to the Maoris upon matters specially or partially affecting them. There is nothing inconsistent with the Bill in the inclusion of a clause to that effect, and I should be very glad to see such a clause put in. I shall be pleased to accept the suggestion of the honourable member for the Northern Maori District (Mr. Heke). Now, I do not wish to occupy the time of the House at this very late or, rather, early hour, but I should like to say a few words to my honourable friend the member for Masterton. That honourable gentleman is evidently prepared to believe in the principle of this Bill, because he said he hoped the Bill would not come into force for a considerable time to come. Mark the words. He is quite ready to admit the time will come when the Bill will be practical, although, judging from that portion of the speech of the honourable gentleman which preceded that admission, I was totally unprepared to hear him make such a concession. The honourable gentleman also spoke of politicians leading the people. I think I have already replied to that. It was surprising to me to hear the honourable gentleman speaking in such deprecating terms of the Hare system. He wanted to know how many people do know anything about the Hare system. It is rather a reproach to the honourable gentleman, as a politician who wants to keep in touch with the times, that he knows nothing about the Hare system. And, Sir, I believe he belongs to an order to which I have also the honour to belong—namely, the Knights of Labour. As he belongs to the Knights of Labour he must of necessity be acquainted with the preamble of that order, and yet he wanted to know who asked for the Referendum. I need only refer the honourable gentleman to the preamble of the order to which he belongs. He will there find the Referendum in one of the paragraphs. It is perfectly pitiable to hear arguments of this kind advanced by experienced politicians—to hear them making such extravagant assertions, and then posing in this House as leaders of public opinion. It pains me to

Mr. O'Regan

refer to him in these terms. But I know he is a prominent member of the Knights of Labour, and, as I know perfectly well from reading the preamble of the order that the Referendum is included in it, what conclusion can I come to when he asks who advocates the Referendum and who wants it? There is

12.30. only one conclusion to be drawn when one hears an honourable gentleman speaking like that. I do hope the House will pass the second reading of the Bill, because, whether honourable gentlemen like it or not, this is one of the coming questions of the day. If you take up the newspapers throughout the colony you will find numerous letters on this question, and at all political meetings the question is discussed. I do not say that a great many are seriously in favour of it, but it is, to use a familiar term, "in the air," and I venture to say it will be one of the burning questions before the next election. There is no argument whatever against the Referendum; it is simply allowing the people to rule. The source of all power must be the people, and our system does not allow the people to adequately express themselves on any question. This Bill proposes to give the people an opportunity to express fully, unreservedly, and decidedly their opinions on certain questions. It must not be thought that every Bill is to be referred to the people. Both Houses will have a voice in deciding what measures shall be so referred: and I should like some honourable members to take a note of this, because, judging from many of the assertions that have been made, some members appear to be under the erroneous impression that all Bills are to be referred to the people. I do hope the majority of this House will see that this is really a democratic measure, and one that will realise all the hopes of the most ardent defenders of the people's liberties. Last, but not least, the Bill shows the way to do without a second Chamber.

The House divided on the question, "That the Bill be now read a second time."

AYES, 19.

Bell	Joyce	Saunders
Buick	Kelly, J. W.	Steward
Earnshaw	Lang	Te Ao.
Graham	McNab	
Hall-Jones	Meredith	<i>Tellers.</i>
Heke	Pirani	O'Regan
Hutchison, G.	Russell, G. W.	Smith, G. J.

NOES, 24.

Cadman	Kelly, W.	Pinkerton
Carnell	Lawry	Reeves
Carroll	Maslin	Seddon
Crowther	McGowan	Stevens
Flatman	Mills	Ward.
Fraser	Montgomery	<i>Tellers.</i>
Guinness	Parata	Collins
Hall	Pere	Hogg.
Harris		

PAIRS.

<i>For.</i>	<i>Against.</i>
Button	Larnach
Green	Massey

Mackenzie, T.	Thompson
McGuire	Allen
McLachlan	Houston
Mitchelson	McKenzie, J.
Newman	Mackintosh
Stout	McKenzie, R.
Wilson.	Duncan.

Majority against, 5.

Motion negatived.

The House adjourned at twenty minutes to one o'clock a.m.

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

Thursday, 30th August, 1894.

First Reading—Third Reading—Dairy Inspection—Shipping and Seamen's Bill—Legitimation Bill—Divorce and Matrimonial Causes Bill—Imprest Supply Bill (No. 3).

The Hon. the SPEAKER took the chair at half-past two o'clock.

PRAYERS.

FIRST READING.

Mackenzie County Boundaries Bill.

THIRD READING.

Animals Protection Bill.

DAIRY INSPECTION.

The Hon. Mr. JENKINSON asked the Government, If the question of inspection of dairies has yet been considered by them, as was intimated in answer to a question asked in the Council on the 6th July; and, if so, if it is their intention to take such steps as will immediately provide for that urgent necessity? In again calling attention to this rather important matter he was influenced to some extent by the receipt of copies of the following letters between the secretary of the Medical Association and the Hospital Board:—

"SIR,—At the last meeting of the Medical Association a resolution was carried that the Local Board of Health be requested to see that the section of the Public Health Act re dairies be put in force. At that meeting a letter was read as follows: 'The urgent necessity of enforcing this Act is shown by a recent report of a subcommittee of the Hospital and Charitable Aid Board. This committee inspected the dairy supplying the milk to the hospital on 3rd June, 1894, and reported that the place was in a most disgraceful condition, and indescribably (filthy) dirty. They also noticed a cow was being driven away from the herd they were inspecting. At their request it was fetched back, and was found suffering from a large running wound. This cow was mixed with the other cows, and had the appearance of having been milked. The subcommittee learnt afterwards that this cow had been removed from the saleyards, as it was not deemed expedient to sell her there, and was disposed of privately for 12s. This cow was stated to have been worth £8 if in a sound condition. They

recommended that fresh tenders should be called for. At another meeting the Board accepted the tender from the same dairy, after receiving certificate dated the 23rd June (ten days after the inspection by the subcommittee) that the place was clean and satisfactory.' The Medical Association would point out that without some safeguards, such as provided by the Act, there is no security that the same condition of affairs may not be repeated, and would also request the Board of Health to inquire as to the ultimate destiny of said unhealthy cow.

"F. W. KING,

"Hon. Sec., Medical Association."

The answer to this was that the letter had been received. Then, on the 1st August Mr. King wrote,—

"SIR,—In reply to yours of this morning, I should very much like for my letter to be read at Council meeting. I would say that your letter contains no answer to my inquiry as to whether the Local Board of Health will enforce section of Public Health Act re inspection of dairies. I should be glad if you would give me an answer.—Yours, &c.,

"F. W. KING."

He received the answer that the cow had been destroyed. On the 3rd August he wrote,—

"SIR,—I am instructed to acknowledge the receipt of yours of August 3rd, stating that my letter respecting the inspection of dairies was ordered to be received; and I point out that your Board can hardly have realised the great public importance of the duties intrusted to their care. In matters of public health there is none of greater importance than the supply of pure milk to the public. May we ask you, therefore, to reconsider the matter? If, as Local Board of Health, you have not the power to put the Act in force, may we ask your consideration of the proposed Dairy Act, so as to ascertain whether it gives you the necessary power; and, if not, will you suggest to our city members what alterations you consider necessary?—Yours, &c.,

"F. W. KING."

He received an answer that the letters had been referred to the legal committee. Such a state of affairs proved, he thought, that the present Act was not sufficient, and he trusted the Government were prepared to deal satisfactorily with the matter.

The Hon. Mr. MONTGOMERY said the Government found they could not by regulation do what was required, and a Bill was before another place making full provision for what was required. It provided that the Governor should have power to appoint Inspectors, and—

"Any Inspector under this Act, or duly authorised officer, shall have the power to inspect any farm, cowshed, or premises where cows are kept, or the milk of such cows is stored, and the food and water supplied to cows the milk of which is sold, supplied, sent, or brought to a dairy, factory, or creamery, or the public; and should such farm, cowshed, or premises be not kept in a clean and satisfactory condition, and an ample supply of food and fresh water provided, the Inspector may notify

in writing the owner to rectify such defects within the time mentioned in such notice; or, should he consider the defects to be of such a nature as to affect the purity or wholesomeness of the milk, he shall at once serve said owner with a notice in writing prohibiting the disposal of such milk until said owner has remedied such defects; and should said owner refuse or neglect to comply with such notice he shall be liable to a penalty as hereafter provided."

He thought that would redeem the promise made to see that proper inspection of dairies should take place in the colony.

SHIPPING AND SEAMEN'S BILL.

The Hon. Mr. MONTGOMERY—In moving the second reading of this Bill I wish to say to honourable members that the object of this Bill is to provide for the comfort of passengers, to prevent overcrowding, and to provide for the protection of life and property at sea. It also makes provision that seamen shall have suitable quarters on board ship, so that the lives of those men who are exposed to hardship shall be made comfortable. I think that comprises the principal provisions of the Bill. It is a measure of a highly technical nature, and I intend to ask the Council, after the second reading, to send the Bill to the Labour Bills Committee, so that the clauses may be thoroughly examined, and the various matters weighed there. Therefore I shall only touch upon what I may call the main features of the Bill. Clause 4 gives power to the Collector of Customs, or other person duly authorised, to see that the number of passengers, either first-class or second-class, is not in excess of that which the vessel is authorised to carry, and also to see that every vessel is fully manned in accordance with the provisions of the Shipping and Seamen's Acts. Clause 5 provides that, if any seaman who may be ill or incapacitated from performing his duties is discharged from a ship, in such case the owner of the vessel shall deposit £50 in the hands of the Collector of Customs to provide for the expense of maintaining such sailor while he is unwell. Clause 6 is an important clause. It provides that "Every seaman shall be engaged or discharged at a Customhouse, or at such other office as may be appointed for this purpose by the Minister." That is to prevent crimps from kidnapping sailors, as they have been accustomed to do. Then, it is provided that, after the passing of this Bill, all sea-going vessels shall carry a certain number of seamen, and, in the case of steamers, they are to carry a certain number of firemen and trimmers, according to the First Schedule of the Bill. That schedule, I may say, is of extreme importance. Nothing that I or any member of this Council could say about it would be at all equal in benefit to a thorough investigation by the Committee. Clauses 8 and 9 provide for the rating of seamen. I merely mention these clauses to draw the attention of honourable members to them. Then, clause 17 makes provision in reference to the offences of seamen, appren-

Hon. Mr. Jenkinson

tices, and others, and provides penalties. Clause 19 is a very important clause. It imposes the duty on ships of carrying life-saving apparatus, and, of course, a sufficient number of boats. I merely mention that as one of the important clauses of the Bill, but the particulars will be found in the clause itself. Clause 23 provides that if any steamship is overcrowded passengers may obtain a refund of their passage-money. Clause 24 makes provision in reference to deck-cargo that may be carried. Clause 25 provides for the compulsory marking of the load-line—that is, what is called the "Plimsoll mark." Clause 31 says,—

"If any person acts as a pilot without being duly licensed he shall be liable for each offence to a penalty not exceeding fifty pounds.

"The Governor may from time to time license pilots, to be called colonial pilots, within the colony, subject to such regulations as he may prescribe, and to the payment into the Consolidated Fund of an annual fee not exceeding five pounds, and may suspend or cancel any such license.

"A colonial pilot may take a vessel from any port of the colony to any other such port, but otherwise shall not act as a local pilot at any port unless duly licensed in that behalf by the Harbour Board of such last-named port."

Clause 34 provides for the examination of those who wish to be considered qualified, and who desire to be granted certificates, and fixes the fees to be paid. Then, provision is made for a certain deck-space and floor-space which are to be provided for each man, so that the men may have fairly comfortable quarters. The exact cubic space is stated in the clause. These details are not such as I need attempt to explain here, or give the reasons for at the present moment, but the space to be provided for each seaman is to be not less than seventy-two nor more than one hundred and twenty cubic feet, and of not less than twelve nor more than eighteen superficial feet, measured on the deck or floor of such place. That is to provide for the comfort of the sailors. Then, certain penalties are provided for breaches of this section of the Act. I merely mention this, because it is out of the question for honourable gentlemen to expect a long speech on each of these clauses. The schedule, which is very important, provides for the number of certificated seamen who must be on board vessels of from 100 tons to 1,000 tons; also as to the number of firemen and trimmers. This is exceedingly important. It must be very important not only to the steamship owners themselves, but to every passenger. It is important that there should be an adequate number of men to assist in navigating the ship and to attend to the engines. I think I am doing best in not descanting at any length on any particular clause, because the Bill is of such a technical nature that no one, except those who are thoroughly well acquainted with ships and shipping matters and with steamers, can thoroughly understand the provisions without having the assistance of an expert. I

therefore shall content myself with moving, *That the Bill be now read the second time*, and shall, after the second reading, move that it be referred to the Labour Bills Committee.

The Hon. Mr. SHRIMSKL.—I hope the honourable gentleman will not look upon it as offensive to him that I should say a few words, but it seems to have become a regular custom here that Ministers should get up and simply read the side-notes of a Bill, without giving us that due information which has caused the introduction of the measure. We can read the side-notes ourselves, but what we require Ministers to do is to give us some information as to the reason which has led to the introduction of the Bill. We have had a Shipping and Seamen's Bill before now placed on the statute-book, and we know very well what it meant, but when a new Bill is introduced we want to know the reason for the introduction of that Bill. We do not simply want the side-notes of the measure read, for we can do that for ourselves.

The Hon. Mr. BONAR.—I should like to ask the honourable gentleman in charge of the Bill if he would kindly not press the second reading for a few days. The honourable gentleman has rightly described the measure as being one of very considerable importance. To my mind it is a Bill of the very greatest importance, because it affects the whole of our mercantile marine. It is of a somewhat technical and complicated character, and could not be examined in the short time which we have had at our disposal. I myself have not had time to examine it so thoroughly as I should wish to do. I see that many of the provisions in this Bill are already in the existing law, but how far the alterations which have been made in the Bill affect the existing law I cannot tell. I know, however, there is an uneasy feeling, more especially amongst the owners of some steamers whose vessels ply from port to port, and along our coasts. It is felt that if this Bill is passed in its present shape it simply means their utter ruin and destruction. It will not have the same effect on large vessels and ocean-going ships, but, so far as our coasting trade is concerned, we know that that trade has been cut down to the lowest point by competition, and it is difficult for owners to earn a fair living. Before the Bill goes into Committee I think we should have a little further opportunity to see what the effect of this Bill will be in reference to our coasting vessels, and I would ask the honourable gentleman if he will kindly agree to postpone the second reading, say, till next Tuesday.

The Hon. Mr. MONTGOMERY.—If the honourable gentleman will move the adjournment of the debate I will accept it.

The Hon. Mr. BONAR.—I beg to move, *That this debate be adjourned until Tuesday next*.

The Hon. Mr. JENKINSON.—It appears to me that the Hon. Mr. Bonar is somewhat inconsistent in the action he has taken. When another Bill was before the Council the other day, he desired that it should be sent without delay to the Labour Bills Committee; but as

this Bill seems to touch the honourable gentleman a little bit nearer he thinks that further time should be given in order that members may consider it.

The Hon. Mr. BONAR.—The Factories Bill was mainly a consolidation measure, as I understood it. Of course, I understand more about this Bill.

The Hon. Dr. POLLEN.—As we are getting towards the end of the session, or towards that period when we shall have more work on our hands than we may desire, and as this Council always wishes to dispose of its business promptly, I think it is not desirable that we should postpone, except for very good cause, the second reading of any of the policy Bills which are presented to us by the Government. The principle of these Bills is all that is discussed on the second reading, and, whatever amendments are required to be made, there is always an opportunity to make them at the proper time, in Committee on the Bill. As far as the principle of this Bill is concerned, I think there can be no reason for postponing our coming to a decision upon its second reading now. I myself have always held, and still hold, the opinion that Shipping and Seamen's Acts are really international laws, and that, as they affect interests that are not represented amongst us, they should be approached with very great caution, and receive the most careful consideration which Bills of that kind can receive. I myself, Sir, in my capacity as Colonial Secretary, in 1877, introduced into this Council, on behalf of the Government, the Bill which is now called in this Bill "the principal Act"—namely, "The Shipping and Seamen's Act, 1877." So strongly was the view which I have just expressed held as to the international character of these laws, that that Bill—although it was simply a transcript or re-enactment of Imperial statutes—was reserved for the signification of Her Majesty's assent before it became law. Amendments of one kind and another have been made in that Act since that time. One was made in 1885, another in 1890, and another in 1891. These later amendments—the Bills embodying them—have been very much of the character of what we have learned to call, in these recent days, "labour Bills." They appear to be introduced mainly for the purpose of protecting the interests of persons engaged in maritime work, very often without reference to the interests of the employers of those people, or to the interests of the very much greater number of persons who are concerned in the maintenance of efficient communication between the different parts of the world. "Poor Jack" has always been, and always will be, a universal favourite. Everywhere and always the Legislatures have shown a disposition to protect him, sometimes against himself, sometimes against the parasites who prey upon him, but always and everywhere there has been a disposition to improve his condition, and make his wandering and comfortless life as comfortable and as beneficial to him as it can possibly be made. The principal Act—that of 1877—

Hon. Mr. Jenkinson

has nearly all the provisions in it which have been embodied in subsequent Acts and in this Bill. If they have not been as effective as they ought to have been, the fault has been in the administration of them, and not in any defects in the law itself, or from any want of disposition on the part of the Legislature to do what was required to be done in each case. Looking at this Bill, I find accentuated the character which I have described as belonging generally to the amendments which have been tacked to the principal Act—that this is, in point of fact, a labour Bill. It seems to regard the interest of the employes in this service as being of much greater consideration than the interests of the employers, and of still greater consideration than the interests of the very large number of people in this colony whose means of existence are dependent upon the maintenance in complete efficiency of our carrying-trade. I find that in clause 7 of this Bill, as interpreted by the schedule, there are provisions which would, I have the best reason to believe, and do believe, operate most disastrously upon a very large portion of the colony, in which I am a resident, and of whose interests I know more than I do of any other part. The whole of the country north of Auckland—roadless and unopened as it is, I am sorry to say, to a very great extent even to this day—is dependent upon its coastal traders, and upon a whole fleet of small cargo steamers, plying in the Kaipara Gulf, and outside on the coast between Auckland and the North Cape, for communication with the market. And I find that in the mistaken interests of what is called labour the interests of all these people will be very seriously compromised by the enactment of clause 7, if it is allowed to pass in its present form. The consequence will be that either that small fleet of steamers which, as I have said, are engaged in this trade will be at once extinguished, or the charges for their maintenance be so increased as to involve a consequent increase of freight and charges to the people, which would be absolutely destructive of the struggling industry in the whole of a very wide district. This is a point which may be said to be a Committee objection, and when in Committee we shall have an opportunity of discussing the way in which it may be remedied. Another clause in reference to which I should like to say a word or two is clause 9. It is an old acquaintance of mine. It was introduced in 1891, I think, and at my instance rejected. I allude to the legal qualification which is proposed to be given to firemen, making them certificated, and insisting upon steam-vessels of every kind carrying a certain number as part of their crew. This was the one weapon—the one single weapon which was wanted to complete the armoury of the Maritime Council at the time of the great strike, which proved so disastrous to this colony, and from which, in great measure, it has not recovered. If the law then had required certificated firemen to be carried on every ship, the whole carrying-trade of the colony would have been at the feet of the manager of the Maritime

Council on that occasion. On a former occasion this Council refused to sanction such a departure from the English law, and I hope that on this occasion it will do the same. I need not detain the Council further on this subject. I think we have heard no reason why we should not read the Bill the second time. I hope that the Committee stage will not be unduly pressed, and I hope to see the objectionable features eliminated when the Bill goes into Committee.

The Hon. Sir P. A. BUCKLEY.—I should just like to say one word in reply to the Hon. Mr. Shrimski. I am sorry to see he is not in his place, but, as usual when that honourable gentleman makes a charge of an objectionable character, he immediately left the chamber, so that one has no opportunity of saying what one would like to say in reply. He was good enough to indulge in language which is not often used here. He said that Ministers were in the habit of not explaining Bills—that they read the side-notes, which he said he could read for himself. I undertake to say that the honourable gentleman does not read one Bill in ten, and that he knows very little about the Bills even when they are passed. I always take the trouble—speaking for myself, and I think my honourable colleague takes as much trouble as any one I have had the pleasure of meeting—to make myself thoroughly acquainted with every measure I introduce into the Council. As far as I am personally concerned, I have never concealed from the Council any information I ought to give. I give the fullest information on every possible subject. I make myself acquainted with the Bills I choose to introduce; and I think the statement of the honourable gentleman is unwarranted, to say the least of it. We have no object in pressing this or any other Bill through, and the fullest opportunity will be afforded to honourable gentlemen to discuss every point. The great object in sending it to a Committee is that it shall be carefully investigated, and, after being investigated, brought down and subjected here to a second investigation. I hope the Council will not tolerate such language as the honourable gentleman was good enough to indulge in.

The Hon. Mr. PHARAZYN.—I hope the honourable gentleman will not press his motion for a prolonged adjournment. It has been said that we are getting now possibly towards the end of the session, and time is of some consequence. At the same time, I quite agree with the Hon. Mr. Jenkinson in his objection to sending Bills in which a principle is involved to a Select Committee instead of first of all discussing the principle in the Council. I do not think, myself, that the principles involved in the Bill are so different from what we have already had as to require any lengthened time for members to thoroughly understand them. I notice two or three clauses which are a distinct improvement upon previous clauses. I quite agree with what has fallen from the Hon. Dr. Pollen as to the possibly—I may say certainly—mischievous effect of clause 9 in

regard to the Auckland trade, in connection with which we had a petition read to-day; and I think it would be a good thing to have that petition printed, so that we may see the effect that the Bill would have upon that kind of business. Also, with regard to clause 7, I think it is a very dangerous clause to introduce into a Bill of this kind. I remember opposing it on a previous occasion, and I feel inclined to do so now. One clause that I noticed I think is a decided improvement on the existing Act, and that is clause 25, in which the Plimsoll mark is defined. One of the defects of the present Act is that, although vessels are required to have the Plimsoll mark placed on them, there is no definition as to the position which it is to take. Therefore it has been the habit of those who are authorised to place the mark to place it at the maximum point at which the ship would float, and in some respects the introducing of the mark has added to the dangers of the sea. But this, of course, gives an opportunity of really considering the necessities in the case of any particular vessel—how far it is safe if loaded to a certain depth—and every provision is made that this should be ascertained. With regard to other portions of the Bill, it appears to me, in some respects, to require modification; but, on the whole, so far as it endeavours not only to protect the lives of seamen, but to add to the safety of the travelling public, we ought to accept its provisions as far as we can, so long as we do not interfere with the commerce of the country. And we must take care that in trying to help the employers we do not oppress the employers so as to render it impossible for them to carry on the business. This is the first point to be carefully considered; otherwise, in attempting to do good to the men by putting penalties on their masters, we may absolutely injure the men.

The Hon. Mr. SWANSON.—I hoped the last speaker would mention that one reason why the Hon. Mr. Bonar should withdraw his motion is, that witnesses have already come up from Auckland to give evidence on the Committee, and there are also a number of members of the House of Representatives who would give evidence before the same Committee.

The Hon. Mr. JENNINGS.—I hope the honourable gentleman will withdraw his suggestion that the debate should be adjourned. It has been very properly pointed out that the session is going on, and, as the last speaker mentioned, the witnesses are here. The Bill has been passed by the other House, and it has also been circulated here for a sufficient length of time to enable us to go on with the debate on the second reading. For those reasons, I think the second reading might be taken now, and the Bill referred to the Labour Bills Committee. There is one particular clause which I am pleased to see has been inserted—namely, subsection (2) of clause 34. I had recently a communication from Auckland from a number of masters of small vessels there who are running those vessels technically called “scows.” These are small vessels very much in use in Auckland in carrying timber from various

places. In subsection (2) provision has been made as follows:—

"Provided further that any person, upon producing proof to the Minister of Marine of his having been in command of any vessel of twenty tons or over trading on the coast of New Zealand for three years or over since January, one thousand eight hundred and eighty-four, may be granted a certificate of service, and the possessor of such certificate shall be held to be a duly-certificated man."

I understand from the communication sent to me, and which is signed by twelve masters, with families dependent on their exertions, that if this were not embodied in the measure they would be absolutely precluded from earning a living. I am glad, therefore, that the subsection made in another place has been adopted in this Bill. In regard to the petition presented to the Council to-day on behalf of a number of steamship proprietors, I think every consideration ought to be given to it. Auckland is placed in a peculiar position, inasmuch as, owing perhaps to the good-nature of its representatives in days gone by in another place, in various parts of the North Island there is no communication at all except by these steamers. Had its representatives been as eager for the good things flying round when the borrowed millions were scattered about, Auckland would have probably had better railway communication in "the neglected North." The position is this: Many settlers would almost be precluded from getting goods if clause 7 is adopted; and I shall certainly assist, in Committee, in amending the clause, provided it is not shown that injustice will not be done to men employed on those small steamers. I think there is some misconception in the minds of honourable gentlemen as to what are called river-limits and extended river-limits. I do not think the clause intended to apply to the river-limit pure and simple. However, these details may very well be settled in Committee. Several members of the Committee, I know, from conversations I have had with them, are of opinion that those who are experts in the knowledge of what is required should be asked to attend its meetings. Therefore I think that various points which may be obscure to us would be cleared up in Committee. I trust that the second reading will be proceeded with, and that the Bill will be referred to the Labour Bills Committee as soon as possible.

The Hon. Mr. BONAR.—May I be allowed to say that, after hearing the expressions of opinion from so many honourable members, I do not desire to press my motion? My objections would be principally directed to the details of the Bill more than to its general principles. Honourable members must, I am sure, agree that any steps to insure the safety and comfort of passengers should properly be considered; and, more especially, seeing that witnesses are in town, I should be very sorry if any action of mine should cause any undue delay. I ask, therefore, for leave to withdraw my motion.

Motion withdrawn.

Hon. Mr. Jennings

The Hon. W. DOWNIE STEWART.—This Bill, as already stated, is extremely important, and the most important part, from one point of view, is that dealing with the existing law, to which honourable gentlemen have not referred—namely, the large portions of existing law which are repealed. That, I think, the Committee should be required to go carefully into, because, from the cursory glance I have taken of the Bill, it seems to me that the Bill repeals some extremely important provisions in the existing law, and, so far as I can judge, without any due reason. I hope, therefore, that the Committee will not only look at what is in the Bill—on the face of it, so to speak—but also at what will be the effect of the repeals of the various sections, there being some twenty sections repealed of the existing law. Another point I should like to see more clearly defined is the position of apprentices on vessels. The present law is very unsatisfactory, and apprentices are very much in the hands of unscrupulous owners of vessels. I know a case down South where a young man went on board a vessel trading between this and the other colonies,—a sailing-vessel,—and the captain died. The apprentice had paid a premium, and the owner refused to recognise his services under the successor of the captain who died except under such onerous conditions as were practically prohibitive. The result was that, although I threatened proceedings against the owner, he would not give way. The parents of this boy had to make certain concessions to enable him to get a start in the world; and this is entirely through the owner of the vessel wishing to exact terms which I considered were extremely unfair. An attempt has been made to deal with it in this Bill, but I think it is a very imperfect attempt; and I should very much like to see the rights of apprentices put on such a footing that the death of a master shall not affect the indentures in any way.

The Hon. Mr. McLEAN.—The Bill before the Council is a very important measure indeed, and I feel glad that it is in the hands of a gentleman who has himself had some experience of seafaring, and who is a fair man, and who would deal fairly with this Bill when it comes to be treated by the Labour Bills Committee. The Act of 1877 was a work in which I took a great deal of interest, and in which I had a very valuable assistant, and to him is due the producing of that Bill in a way that gave, I think, very great satisfaction. I refer to the late Mr. Seed, who was a very clever man, a very clever administrator, and in connection with whose death the loss sustained by the colony was very great. With him I devoted months to that Act, and we thought we had pretty well a perfect measure; but amendments have been sought to be made in it, and no doubt it has some defects, and the present Bill is probably prepared with a view to remedying some of them. But, Sir, this Bill was brought in some sessions ago in the heat of a fight which, as my honourable friend has truly said, this colony has not yet recovered from. It was brought in at that time in

such a shape that I think it was well for the colony that it was delayed, and consideration given to it. It has undergone very considerable modifications since then, and in the course of the last few days it has undergone considerable modifications, and I think very likely it will undergo some more modifications before it passes this Council—modifications which, I venture to say, the Government will be very glad to accept, as they will be glad to accept any assistance to bring the Bill into a workable shape. My honourable friend referred to the Bill of 1892, in which the classification of firemen was endeavoured to be passed. Now, Sir, during the whole time the unions were in full swing, and working with our company, they had to permit the company many times to take men off the streets in order to fill the stokehole. They were in the position that the men got ashore, and we could not sail without firemen, and they had no men to give us, so we were forced to take the best men we could, and from where we could. If you allow this classification to go into the Bill you may sometimes stop the steamers, and may stop some of the big Home steamers until men could be procured. No classification is necessary. The companies will not take ordinary men if they can get qualified men. This is a provision that ought to be taken out of the Bill. There is also here a classification of seamen. I believe seamen should be qualified; but I ask honourable gentlemen who know anything about it whether twelve months on board a coasting-steamer will not make a man as good a sailor as a five years' qualification. A steamboat sailor does not need to know much about going aloft. All these qualifications for sailors and firemen are going to shut your own born New-Zealanders out of your steamers, which I think is undesirable. During the strike we got a large number of respectable "cockatoos" sons into the boats, and they are there now, very steady, industrious men, and have kept their situations—men who were probably earning on their fathers' farms perhaps 2s. a day, or nothing a day except their clothes—they have had very nice billets ever since. Thus a great number of farmers' sons were enabled to get into desirable employment: and these are men that you should desire to get into your marine instead of foreign seamen and firemen. To show how careful it is necessary to be in regard to this Bill, when it was lately before the Committee the single letter "i." was slipped into the schedule. I should just like to say what the effect of putting in this letter "i." would have on the company to which I belong. All admit they want no more into the Union Company's ships—they are well and sufficiently manned; they want to bring others up to the same standard. The admission of this single letter "i." would cost the company £14,000 a year, unnecessarily spent. I mention this to show honourable members how careful the Council should be with a Bill like this, which probably few members understand. Although it is admitted they do not want others to quite

come up to our standard, but would allow us to carry less if we wished, still an increase is proposed in this Bill of twenty-seven firemen and thirty-six trimmers in some of the company's steamers. In other cases there is a reduction of thirteen firemen and six trimmers. We do not want a reduction; we do not want to reduce any of our men; but I make this statement to show you how difficult it is to produce a schedule that will be fair to all. I must explain that a vessel works up to a certain horse-power according to the trade she is in. In some trades she is driven at high speed, consequently her indicated horse-power will be high. Again, you must have more men, who would not be necessary in other trades. So that this schedule will require alteration.

The Hon. Mr. MONTGOMERY.—It will require careful consideration, at any rate.

The Hon. Mr. MCLEAN.—I believe the Government do not wish to do anything unjust, only, from want of knowledge, they may be wrong. They have expressed themselves willing to accept any reasonable amendment. With regard to what my honourable friend says as to protection against the overcrowding of passengers, I may mention that in other colonies a steamer is allowed to carry what she is licensed to carry, both saloon and second-class, and the total of these classes is her complement of what she is allowed to carry. But in this colony we happen to have few steerage passengers, and if you have a few over in the cabin, you break the law. Surely some latitude is wanted as regards overcrowding, and that latitude is that the passengers shall themselves be satisfied, and the classes added together as in other colonies, the main stipulation being that you have proper life-saving apparatus on board for every passenger carried. The system in force in the other colonies is much fairer than in this. Hitherto all legislation has not been in the direction of the restriction of trade, but the reverse. But now the whole tenor of our legislation is to restrict trade. That has been the case in regard to the Bills brought forward lately, all with the view of putting owners in the power of the unions in the event of a strike; but let me tell honourable members that it would be far less expense, and much less trouble, if the ships were allowed to lie in harbour when a difficulty occurred, instead of being run. If all the people were discharged, and the ships laid up, no expense would be incurred; so that, as far as stopping ships going to sea is concerned, probably it would suit the pockets of the owners better to lay them up. Our company has never sent a ship to sea if there was the slightest defect or chance of any danger in any form. Our marine superintendent and our chief engineer have instructions that every ship shall be perfectly found, and in as good a condition as it is possible to make her: then, when she goes to sea, if anything happens you have the satisfaction that it was through no fault of the company. It is always very distressing to hear of any accident

at sea, but all we can do is to keep our ships in such a condition that they will be able to keep clear of accidents, and in our company, as I have explained, every effort is taken to do that. I say that ships ought not to be in the hands of owners who run them in a condition that they might meet with accident at any moment. There are owners—but I am glad to say not many—who do not man their ships properly, and who do not take all the care they ought to take. It is very hard to compete against such people, and I say it is criminal neglect to allow such ships to sail in the condition that some of them are sailed in. I think that power should be given to the Government to prevent any chance of a man sailing in what we call "death-traps," for people will go in these if they get a few shillings cheaper; and if they will consider that matter I shall be happy to give them every help I can. There are several other matters in this Bill, which are simply Committee amendments and can be discussed in Committee. I am sorry to have to detain the House on the matter, but it is one upon which few have experience, and I think it is the duty of those who have experience to enlighten honourable members as much as they can, because it is a subject that few understand, and members generally cannot be expected to know the difficulties in connection with sea-going vessels and the sailing of them so as to protect the lives of the people who "go down to the sea in ships."

The Hon. Sir G. S. WHITMORE.—I regret that the Government have not, in bringing in this Bill, also brought in a Navigation Bill, because I think it is one of the most lamentable things—and anybody can notice it any day—to see the exceedingly small proportion of New-Zealanders that go to sea at all. New Zealand, on account of its island position, should raise a nautical population, but we do not seem to be doing so. The Hon. Mr. McLean has told us—and he always speaks on this subject with knowledge of what he is talking about, and is always listened to with great attention—that this Bill ought to be amended in some particulars. I do not think it ought to be sent to the Labour Bills Committee, or, if sent to that Committee, the Committee should be combined with a selected number of those gentlemen who are experts on this subject. I do not think any one would think of managing an army by consulting the views of the privates, nor would any one suppose that a Seamen's Bill could be made workable if dealt with entirely from the position of the sailors. I presume the Labour Bills Committee is selected from those honourable members who fully understand the wants and rights of labour, and I think that this Bill ought not to go to the Labour Committee, but to a specially-selected Committee the members of which will be well qualified to give valuable information upon this subject. I think it should be arranged that the Attorney-General should refer the Bill to a special Committee after it comes from the Labour Committee, and that would meet the objection, as I

Hon. Mr. McLean

do not think in the Council we could possibly go into the questions involved in the long schedule attached to the Bill, or into the clauses of the Bill. I would again repeat that I should like to see every New-Zealand-owned vessel going out of harbour with a certain percentage of apprentices on board, in order that we may, in time, have a young maritime community growing up in our midst. This seems to be all the more necessary since the agricultural industry has to a large extent declined; and now that we have such a large number of unemployed all over the colony we might find a very good occupation for them if they would only take to the sea.

The Hon. Mr. JENKINSON.—I think the colony is to be congratulated on having such a company as the Union Steamship Company, and I do not suppose that there is anywhere a better found, a better manned, or a better turned-out fleet than that owned by the company. But I should like to say a few words in answer to the remarks of the Hon. Mr. McLean regarding the "cockatoos" sons who took the places of the men who would not sail, and who, it is said, enabled the company to run their ships. I think it was a very discreditable thing that the sons of New Zealand farmers and "cockatoos" should have been so willing to supplant and take the bread out of the mouths of the men who would not sail in the ships through their regard for the principles of unionism, and my opinion of those "cockatoos" sons is that they are not of such a class as should call forth the admiration of this Council. There were a great many of them "ne'er-do-weels," who had found that they could do nothing in this colony, and, as a last resource, they were only too glad to jump into the places of men who stood to their convictions and to their unions, and who said they would not sail in the boats. I think the less said about them the better, for many of them were of the same class as some of those men who are leaving the shores of New Zealand at the present time to take the places of the shearers in Queensland, and who should be regarded almost as the scum of society. That is my opinion of these men whom we are called upon to admire for having stepped into the shoes of the unionists and enabled the Union Steamship Company to run their boats. In a great many cases they were untrained men, without any knowledge of the business, and if it had not been for the engineers and officers on board of these vessels the vessels would have had to be laid up, in many cases. My honourable friend the Hon. Mr. McLean knows perfectly well that in many cases the engineers had to do the firing and the officers had to sail the ships, because those who went on board as "blacklegs" were quite unable to do the work. The honourable gentleman said, in regard to overcrowding, that if the passengers were satisfied there should be no necessity to provide against overcrowding, or, if the stercage was not filled, he did not see any reason why the cabin should not be allowed to have a few extra passengers. But the passengers are not

satisfied if they have to spend the night on the tables in the cabin with simply a rug over them. That is not the way to give satisfaction to passengers, and I think some provision should be made to prevent overcrowding, even should the steerage not be filled. The Union Steamship Company may try to give satisfaction, but some companies may not be so willing to serve the passengers. Clause 23, which provides against overcrowding, says,—

"If any steamship has on board thereof, or on or in any part thereof, any number of passengers of any class which is greater than the number of passengers of such class allowed by the certificate, then and in every such case, besides the penalty to which the owner, or master, or other person in charge of such ship is liable under section one hundred and ninety-six of the principal Act, every passenger of the class whose numbers are in excess as aforesaid may, if not provided with a berth, sue for and recover the full amount of passage-money paid by him from the owner or charterer of such ship."

I think provision might be made that, when a passenger is not satisfied with the accommodation, through the vessel being overcrowded, he should be able to apply to the Collector of Customs at the first port and get his fare refunded. If a man were to leave here for Melbourne or Dunedin, and he found that the vessel was overcrowded on the way between here and Lyttelton, if he had to stop in Lyttelton, say, to sue the company for his passage he would probably be detained several days; and I think it would be quite sufficient and much more convenient if he were able to apply to the Collector of Customs and have the claim dealt with without delay. I do not think this provision, even if passed, will be taken advantage of very often, because a passenger who is anxious to get to his destination would feel disposed to put up with any little inconvenience. I am very glad that in this Bill we have made stringent provision for the compulsory marking of the load-line. The principal Act of 1877, clause 225, section 2, in regard to the load-line, says, "The centre of this disc shall indicate the maximum load-line in salt water to which the owner intends to load the ship for that voyage." This is not sufficiently definite. I have heard it said—I do not know if there is any truth in it—that vessels used to leave England long after the Plimsoll Act came into force there with a disc representing the load-line painted upon the funnel or mast. The matter was left entirely to the master, and he put the load-line where he liked, so long as he complied with the provision that there must be such a line. According to this Bill, the load-line will be several feet from the deck. In clause 22 we have provision for better supervision—a very useful and important work. Last session I called attention to a slight accident that occurred on board a vessel leaving New Zealand. I do not know whether it was due to careless supervision, but it appeared to me that it was; and, as it would appear from this report of an inquiry which I will read that

another vessel was not quite so well provided with proper appliances, I think that surveyors who are empowered to make surveys and inspections have not, in some cases, carried out their duty. This report is of the case of the stranding of the "Jessie Readman," referred to in a telegram from Wellington, dated the 21st February, 1894. The captain, in his evidence, after showing where the vessel was, and so forth, said, "He had three boats on board. The lifeboat appeared in good condition, but the false stem was found to be rotten, and the planks partly came away. It was also discovered that one of the other boats was not fit for service. Eventually, however, all hands got ashore in the lifeboat." Surely there was lax supervision here. The Hon. Mr. McLean has referred to the schedule, and I will call attention to one particular point in the schedule which will require consideration. According to this, vessels of 1,000 indicated horse-power and up to 1,600 indicated horse-power must carry not less than four certificated firemen and two trimmers, but a vessel of 1,620 indicated horse-power would have to carry four trimmers and from three to six firemen. I do not think that is exactly fair; but probably the Labour Bills Committee will be able to arrange that matter. I shall support the Bill.

The Hon. Mr. BONAR.—I should like to ask the permission of the Council to say a word or two. The Hon. Mr. Jenkinson referred to the question as to the want of proper care exercised by the Inspectors in regard to these vessels. I can say from my own practical experience that there could not be found by any possibility any men who are more careful, or who are more honestly desirous of carrying out their duty with the very utmost regard to the law, than the Inspectors who now inspect and make these surveys on the coast. I submit from my own personal experience that they are honest men, and are not only desirous of doing their duty, but do it without fear, favour, or affection. I wish to bear this testimony from my own knowledge, and therefore I have asked permission to say so.

The Hon. Mr. MONTGOMERY.—I shall not allude to what the Hon. Dr. Pollen said, because he has gone into the matter at very considerable length, and I am quite sure the provisions of this Bill could not be fully explained under an hour or an hour and a half. I am quite sure that even then there would be few people who would practically understand it. The Bill must, as I said before, go to a Committee. The Hon. Mr. McLean has raised one or two points, and very properly so, which I hope the members of the Committee will bear in mind. He is on the Committee himself, and with his practical knowledge of the matter and sound common-sense I think we can be satisfied that he will be an acquisition to the Committee. There are thirteen or fourteen members on this Committee, and I am quite sure there are a number of experts on it. I think the Hon. Mr. Swanson knows a good deal about ships, and I am quite sure that in that Committee the matter will be thoroughly

sifted, and we shall know where the provisions are too stringent, or where they are not stringent enough. I remember the time when there was no Act regarding seamen at all, and I remember the time when the provisions were only salt junk one day and pork another, and when there was neither tea nor sugar for the men. They had porridge in the morning, or, as it was called, "burgoo," with molasses and not even treacle. I remember, when the English Act of Parliament was brought in—I think in 1846—some of the owners and masters saying that by-and-by an Act would be brought in providing that certain provisions should be found for sailors, and they would require feather pillows, and have to be treated as children. Since that time a change has come over public opinion, and the sailor has to be provided for comfortably on board ship. Now, with the advance of public opinion, we have arrived at a late stage in this Bill. The Bill may not be perfection, and I am quite sure there are points in it that will require very careful consideration, and, perhaps, revision. I can say for myself, and I think I can say for the members of the Committee, that they only want a fair thing. We want to make provision that ships shall not be overcrowded, that the passengers shall be comfortably lodged, and that there shall be a proper number of boats and life-saving appliances, and a proper number of certified seamen provided for the due navigation of the vessel, and that those seamen shall be properly cared for on board, and shall not be put into what have been called "dog-kennels." To say that that Committee, when it has been set up to consider this Bill, will not consider the owners of the ships—that the owners will not get consideration—is to say that that Committee will be entirely one-sided. While the passengers and sailors are to be considered, the owners of ships are also to be considered, and no stringent regulations will be imposed upon them to prevent them from sailing their ships honestly. The Hon. Mr. McLean said that he approved of the law being strict with men who sent their ships to sea in an unfit state. That is what I hope this Bill will provide against, and in entering upon this aspect of the question I recognise that the whole trade of a country like New Zealand might be paralysed if provision were not made against the effects of strikes which may have in them nothing of justice. I think that the regulations should be such that a man wilfully obstructing—I do not care whether it is in the case of a ship or anything else—should not be allowed to do so. I quite agree with that. I have served on board ship, and I sympathize with the miseries and unhappiness of men, with the bad manner in which they have been lodged, and with the manner in which they have been used. We want people to do their duty, and to see that the ships have the proper number of men to navigate them where there are not at present sufficient. But we also want to insure that men shall not leave their ships at a moment's notice and so stop the trade. Let us make a Bill that will be fair for both sailors and

Mr. Montgomery

passengers, while, at the same time, the owners will be satisfied. That is what we ask. I trust that the Committee will, as the result of their labours, bring down a measure that will meet with the approval of this Council. I beg to move the second reading of the Bill.

Bill read the second time.

LEGITIMATION BILL.

On the question, *That this Bill be read the third time,*

The Hon. Sir G. S. WHITMORE moved, *That the Bill be recommitted for the purpose of reconsidering clause 2.*

The Council divided on the question, "That the words proposed to be omitted stand part of the question."

AYES, 16.

Acland	Jennings	Rigg
Barnicoat	Kerr	Shrimski
Bolt	MacGregor	Stevens
Bowen	McCullough	Stewart
Feldwick	McLean	Swanson.
Jenkinson		

NOES, 11.

Baillie	Montgomery	Walker, L.
Bonar	Oliver	Whitmore
Buckley	Pharazyn	Williams.
Dignan	Richardson	

Majority for, 5.

Amendment negatived, and Bill read the third time.

DIVORCE AND MATRIMONIAL CAUSES BILL.

IN COMMITTEE.

Clause 3.—Divorce, in what cases.

The Hon. W. DOWNIE STEWART moved, *That progress be reported.*

The Committee divided.

AYES, 10.

Acland	Feldwick	Richardson
Bonar	Kerr	Shrimski
Bowen	McLean	Stewart.
Buckley		

NOES, 8.

Bolt	MacGregor	Rigg
Jenkinson	McCullough	Swanson.
Jennings	Morris	

Majority for, 2.

Motion agreed to, and progress reported.

IMPREST SUPPLY BILL (No. 3).

This Bill was read the first, the second, and the third time.

The Council adjourned at fifteen minutes to eight o'clock p.m.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.

Thursday, 30th August, 1894.

First Reading—Second Reading—Gaming Bill—Imprest Supply Bill (No. 3)—Supply.

Mr. SPEAKER took the chair at half-past two o'clock.

PRAYERS.

FIRST READING.

Ngaere and other Blocks Native Claims Adjustment Bill.

SECOND READING.

Dairy Industry Bill.

GAMING BILL.

Mr. LAWRY brought up the following reasons for disagreeing with the amendments made by the Legislative Council in this Bill:—

"(1.) This new clause is objectionable as taking from the Colonial Secretary the responsibility of granting licenses for the use of the totalisator.

"(2.) The new clause is also objectionable as proposing to confer on the president of a club proposed to be established the power of licensing."

Reasons agreed to.

IMPREST SUPPLY BILL (No. 3).

IN COMMITTEE.

On the question, That £308,500 be granted to Her Majesty the Queen by way of imprest supply.

Mr. MITCHELSON moved, That progress be reported, and leave given to sit again.

The Committee divided.

AYES, 10.

Bell	Lang	<i>Tellers.</i>
Earnshaw	Newman	Mackenzie, T.
Fraser	Russell, W. R.	Mitchelson.
Kelly, J. W.	Wilson	

NOES, 39.

Buddo	Joyce	O'Regan
Cadman	Kelly, W.	Parata
Carncross	Larnach	Reeves
Carnell	Lawry	Russell, G. W.
Carroll	Mackintosh	Seddon
Collins	Maslin	Smith, G. J.
Duncan	McGowan	Stevens
Flatman	McKenzie, J.	Tanner
Graham	McKenzie, R.	Ward
Hall	McLachlan	Willis.
Heke	Meredith	<i>Tellers.</i>
Hogg	Montgomery	Harris
Houston	Morrison	Mills.
Hutchison, G.		

Majority against, 29.

Motion negatived.

Resolution reported.

Mr. G. HUTCHISON desired to say a word or two in the House on a subject which he had referred to in Committee, and he desired to pursue exactly the same line now as he did then. He would, no doubt, be corrected if he

was wrong. What he wished to refer to was the unsatisfactory and insufficient character of the replies which had been given by the Colonial Treasurer in answer to questions bearing on the public finances; and, as an instance of the unsatisfactory character of those replies, he desired to refer to the following fact—namely, that when the House was in Committee of Supply the Colonial Treasurer was asked the question when the income-tax would be levied. The Colonial Treasurer's reply was that "the income-tax would be levied at the time it was thought desirable to be collected"—a form of reply illustrative of others which he (Mr. Hutchison) thought highly objectionable.

Mr. WARD rose to a point of order. He desired to ask whether the honourable member was justified in referring to a question which was put in Committee of Supply, and not in the Committee from which they had just emerged, but a former Committee of Supply. There had been no such question as that to which the honourable gentleman now referred raised in Committee of Supply during that afternoon.

Mr. G. HUTCHISON, speaking to the point of order, desired to corroborate what had been just stated. The question had been answered in Committee of Supply the other evening.

Mr. SEDDON desired to say that a debate was taking place at the time on an item in the estimates.

Mr. SPEAKER said that if the point had been raised in Committee of Supply and decided he would have no power to overrule the decision come to. No appeal lay from the Chairman of Committees to the Speaker. The Chairman of Committees had power to deal with questions arising in Committee, and it would be improper for him (Mr Speaker) to express an opinion on a point of order that had arisen in Committee, and which the Chairman of Committees had decided.

Resolution agreed to, and Bill read a first, a second, and a third time.

SUPPLY.

5.0. Mr. WARD moved, That the House do resolve itself into Committee of Supply. In reply to a question previously asked by the honourable member for Patea, he begged to state that the Customs revenue for July amounted to £130,400, which was an increase of £14,600 upon the Customs duties received for the previous month of June.

Mr. G. HUTCHISON asked how that compared with July of last year.

Mr. WARD said he had given the information which the honourable gentleman had asked for. He asked for the amount of the Customs revenue for the month of July. The exact figures for the month of July were £130,343 15s. 9d., and for the month of June £115,758 10s. 10d., so that it was an increase, as he had stated, of a sum of £14,600 for July over June. Now, he hoped the reply he had given was satisfactory.

Mr. G. HUTCHISON.—No. Give us the corresponding month of last year.

Mr. WARD said the figures for July showed an increase of £14,600 upon those of June, and

he understood that was not satisfactory to the honourable gentleman.

Mr. G. HUTCHISON said that was quibbling.

Mr. WARD said he should be very glad to get and give the honourable gentleman the further information he now wanted. The honourable gentleman, in Committee, asked him to state what the Customs revenue for July was. He had given him that information, and now the honourable gentleman was asking him to do something else, and said his reply was not satisfactory. He had given him the revenue for the month of June as well.

Mr. G. HUTCHISON.—What about April and May?

Mr. WARD said he would be very glad to give him that information also, but he did not ask for that in Committee of Supply.

Mr. G. HUTCHISON appealed to the Chairman if he did not do so.

Mr. GUINNESS said the honourable gentleman, on the second occasion, did say that he applied for the information for the three months.

Mr. WARD said he was now asking for four months.

Mr. G. HUTCHISON might state that he had said the three months—April, May, and June—besides July.

Mr. WARD said he must, then, have misunderstood the honourable gentleman, and he would be very glad to obtain and give him the information he desired. It would, he was sure, be very gratifying to the House and the country to know that the Customs revenue for July was £14,600 better than that for June. That showed that the Customs revenue, at any rate, was not falling off.

Mr. R. McKENZIE moved, as an amendment, That the time has arrived when it is desirable an import duty should be imposed on coal. He thought he might safely say that the time had arrived when an import duty on coal should be imposed. They had very large areas of the very best coal that could be got anywhere, and, after spending large amounts of money on harbour-works and railways, it was now time that they brought some measure of protection to bear on the colony's coal-production. He might mention that through the recent election in New South Wales a number of members here were under the impression there would be free-trade between this colony and New South Wales. A few days ago they received the telegraphic report of the Speech of the Governor of New South Wales in opening Parliament, and in that Speech there was no indication given of reciprocity. Now, he wanted to impress upon the representatives of country districts the fact that the only way to bring about reciprocity with New South Wales was to place a duty upon its imports here. Last year this colony imported a hundred and eight thousand pounds' worth of coal from New South Wales. If we were to show the people of that colony that unless they accepted our produce free of duty we would certainly not admit their produce duty-

Mr. Ward

free, they would come to see the advisability of having reciprocity, because if they understood fair trade at all they would know that there was no fair trade now between us and them. The quantity of coal that was imported into this colony would provide direct employment for about five hundred men, besides those who would be indirectly employed in connection with it. That would be a very useful thing at the present time in this colony, where the labour-market was congested, and where many working-men were walking about doing nothing. He might point out that the coal imported into the colony at present had been the means of causing a great stagnation in the coal trade. Petitions were coming to the House from all parts of the country, praying that a duty might be imposed on coal from outside. They had had a very large petition from Auckland the other day, and they had also got one from Dunedin. People in both these places asked that a duty might be placed on coal: in fact, the people all over the colony were asking for this duty. Now, in his opinion it was a very desirable thing that the duty should be imposed at once. He might point out that the imposition of a duty on coal would not make the slightest difference to the consumer; it would not be the means of raising the price of coal one single farthing. As a matter of fact, the price of coal was bound to come down very materially in a very short time. At the present time, on the West Coast there were five different new coal-mines being opened up. As soon as they were in a position to place their coal on the market—and that would be in a few months—the price of coal was almost sure to come down, so that the imposition of this duty on imported coal would make no difference whatever to the consumer. He might say that if the House thought that there would be any probability of reciprocity being brought about through this duty he would be perfectly willing that the Government should try the duty for a year in order to bring about reciprocity. If reciprocity were to be brought about by this means, one or two years' trial of the duty would give a fair idea of its effect, and if it did not have the desired result in that time they could continue it for a while longer. He did not think any honourable member could reasonably object to give it a year's trial, at any rate.

An Hon. MEMBER.—What quantity of coal is imported now?

Mr. R. McKENZIE.—An honourable gentleman asked what quantity of coal was imported now. A hundred and twenty thousand tons of coal were imported last year, at a cost of £108,000. He might say that the volume of our trade with New South Wales since that colony had adopted a Protective tariff had fallen to about 25 per cent. of what it was previous to the adoption of that by New South Wales. We had a large trade with New South Wales a few years ago, and now it had dropped down to a very insignificant item as compared with the total volume of our trade. As several other gentlemen wanted to speak on the ques-

tion, he would not detain the House further, as it was getting near the dinner adjournment.

Mr. MORRISON rose to second the amendment which had been moved by the honourable member for the Buller; and in support of this amendment he would like to draw the House's attention to this fact: that during last year we produced in this colony 673,000 tons of coal, and we exported from the colony 28,169 tons of coal, but as a large quantity of that coal was put on board the mail-steamers it was really not exported in the strict sense of the term. Now, with regard to placing an import duty on coal imported into the colony, he found that the quantity of coal imported into the colony during 1893 was upwards of 125,000 tons—the exact figures were 125,453 tons of coal. Now, they should take the effect that had on the local industries and the mining population of this colony—the effect this import of 125,000 tons of coal had upon the mines of this colony. The mere amount of money that would have been spent on wages in this colony in employing the number of miners necessary to provide this immense output would amount to close on £100,000. He would like to draw the honourable gentleman's attention to the fact that the expenditure of an additional £100,000, being placed in the hands of the workers of the colony in one year, would have a tendency not only to assist the mining industry, but every other industry that was to be found round a mining township. With regard to the number of men required to be employed in order to produce this extra output of coal, he might say that the number now employed—still dealing with statistics—amounted at present to 1,681: that was the number of miners employed during 1893, so that 1,681 miners were employed in producing this output of 673,315 tons of coal. Now, if they added to this output of coal the 125,000 tons odd that were imported from New South Wales to this colony, it would mean that it would find employment for some five or six hundred more men. He thought these were facts that the House should take into its consideration in dealing with an important matter like this, and it showed the strong necessity that existed for placing a small import duty, at any rate, upon coal imported into the colony. Seeing that New South Wales and the other colonies had placed an import duty on the goods that went to them from this colony, he thought this was a way to bring them to their senses, and if we placed an import duty on their goods coming here they would be brought to know where the shoe pinched. He was not going to detain the House, as he was suffering from a severe cold, but he simply contented himself with drawing attention to the facts he had stated in connection with this matter.

Mr. E. M. SMITH hoped the House would reject this amendment. He believed no man in this colony had done more in the effort to develop the coal industry of New Zealand than he had himself. He could prove it. He was interested also in it, and he had samples of splendid coal out in the lobby, which he could produce, to

show they had between Taranaki and Auckland Districts four hundred square miles of coal. As chairman of the Mokau Coal Company he might say that at the present time, if he had a proper amount of capital and ships to take the coal away, he could supply it in Wellington for 10s. a ton cheaper than coal was now being sold here. He (Mr. Smith) was a moderate Protectionist, but he wanted to reverse the lever. The honourable member for the Buller wanted to force the New South Wales Government into reciprocity with this colony, and by imposing this duty for one year he thought he could do so. What a ridiculous proposal! The Government had been asked to appoint a conference to see if they could not bring about a great change in the trade relations between the various colonies. That would be the proper way to approach the other colonies. He had great hopes that, before this session closed, the Government would give the House an assurance that they would, during the recess, appoint a conference—that they would approach the Government of New South Wales with a view to having a conference, and see if they could not bring about reciprocity. He did believe in Protection against the countries on the Continent of Europe, but he did believe in intercolonial free-trade, and he knew a large number of honourable members who would support that, and who believed that a conference was the proper means of bringing it about. That was the reason he was going to vote against the amendment. Another great thing the House had to consider was that we could never have any large industries in the colony—such as ironworks, cementworks, and glass-manufactories—without cheap coal. He knew that the price at which coal from Westport and Greymouth was being sold in New Zealand, and particularly in the Town of Wellington, at the present moment was such as to be almost prohibitive. There was no doubt about it. He was surprised to see when travelling on the railway-line last Friday thousands of tons of timber alongside the line. In France, Germany, Belgium, and Austria they would be found gathering together the unemployed, and employing them in converting that timber into charcoal to bring down to Wellington and undersell this coal, which was being sold at £1 16s. a ton. He would like to support the honourable gentleman but that he knew his proposal was impracticable, and that it would be against the best interests of the country to support him. That was the reason why he rose to ask honourable members to reject this ridiculous proposal. He only spoke as a practical man, from a practical point of view. These people in Greymouth and Westport had received from this colony £500,000 for the improvement of their harbours. The colony had spent two or three hundred thousand pounds on railways for them, and it had spent hundreds and hundreds of thousands of pounds upon the coal-mines, and there were deposits of coal there sufficient to justify the expenditure. But when they knew that that coal was brought to grass—that was, into daylight—for

4s. a ton, they found that, when that coal had only to be taken from Greymouth or Westport here to the metropolis of New Zealand, it was retailed at such a high price that the poor wretches who lived here—the working-men of the place—had to go and buy little bags of coal on Saturday to give these enormous returns to the coal-producers—it showed that something was wrong. Yet, under such circumstances, to put an import duty upon coal would only be to block out cheaper coal from coming in. It was ridiculous. A man had only recently been around New Zealand and had secured contracts from gasworks at Napier and elsewhere to supply coal at a less rate than these people were willing to, or could, supply coal at from Westport and Greymouth. These facts stood out in bold relief against the agitation for this railway that was going to assist in making political capital for that district. Our aims should be higher, and it was not doing justice to the district itself—it was not doing justice to the colony—to ask them to do this. He felt convinced the honourable gentleman would regret the action he had taken, because the number of honourable members who would go with him (Mr. Smith) into the lobby to vote against this amendment would astonish him, he could assure the honourable gentleman. The honourable gentleman should rather have done all he possibly could to lower the price of coal. He

7.30. had no desire to prolong the debate, because he knew the Government wished to get into Committee of Supply, but he did not think they could be doing more useful work for the colony than by debating the amendment of the honourable member for the Buller. He was going to express his opinions publicly, for the benefit of the colony. Think of the absurdity of the honourable member's amendment! At the present moment they could buy Newcastle coal imported into the colony for 7s. or 8s. a ton cheaper than they could buy Westport or Greymouth coal in any of the large centres of population in the colony. That in itself ought to be sufficient to induce honourable members to reject this amendment. Now, the honourable gentleman stated that he was doing this for retaliation—to make the New South Wales legislators come down on their knees and meet this colony in a fair and honourable way. If it was wrong in principle for the New South Wales Parliament to impose upon the dairy produce of New Zealand an import duty—on our butter, cheese, and other produce—because they had adopted one bad principle, was this colony to follow suit? Not at all. That was not the way to bring about reciprocity. A fair adjustment of the tariff for the benefit of the two colonies could only be obtained by a conference selected from amongst the best men they could find—he did not mean to say from those high-flown politicians, but from practical men, who represented the bone and sinew of the colony, and who could deal with questions from a practical point of view. He knew very well the principal object the honourable gentleman had in view; but,

Mr. E. M. Smith

while it might suit the district which the honourable gentleman represented, how would it act on the industries in the north? Many of the vessels trading with the North Island came over for New Zealand timber, which they carried at a cheap rate, because they could bring Newcastle coal one way and take timber the other. Now, if they blocked that coal out of the market without any warning whatever these vessels might not come over for our timber; and where would be the benefit? There would be none, and the colony would be the loser. The honourable gentleman had done very well in this Parliament for a young member. He had succeeded in getting the Government to include in their financial proposals a bonus on 50,000 tons of coal exported. He (Mr. Smith) would support that, and he had already spoken in its favour. If the honourable gentleman had been satisfied with that, and let well alone, it would have been all right; but when he attempted with one swoop to come down on the House, and ask them to put 5s. a ton on all coal imported into New Zealand, the thing was an absurdity. He knew very well the Greymouth coal was good—in fact, one of the best coals in the Southern Hemisphere for making illuminating gas—but he knew that for some purposes, however, the Newcastle coal was better. In the ironworks in Auckland they could not use the Westport coal in its raw state. They could only use it if it was converted into coke. When he was in Auckland, and had the ironworks entirely at his command, together with men and machinery, they sent down to Westport or Greymouth for 200 tons of coal, which cost £2 a ton at Onehunga.

An Hon. MEMBER.—Shameful.

Mr. E. M. SMITH said the very fact of its costing £2 a ton made it impossible for him to manufacture iron in the colony at a profit. Why, it took very nearly a ton and a half of coal to make a ton of coke, and at that price it was impossible to keep the machinery at work. The honourable member did not seem to consider the iron trade or any of the kindred industries when he spoke on the question. If the honourable gentleman got this motion carried the people of his district would meet him with flags and banners, and he would be given the greatest banquet ever seen in the colony. The Premier's banquets would be nothing to it. The west coast of the Middle Island had already done very well at the hands of the Legislature. They had had £500,000 for the Westport and Greymouth harbour-works and their railways. Now the honourable gentleman came into the House and asked for further concessions. In his (Mr. Smith's) district the people were bearing the burden of 1s. in the pound on the rateable value of their properties, and they wanted the House to give them consideration, but they could not get it. He hoped, however, to get it when he brought forward the motion of which he had already given notice, and that the matter would be dealt with as fairly as the Westport and Greymouth Harbours had been dealt with.

This question involved a great principle. It brought in the question of Free-trade *versus* Protection. He admitted boldly that he was a moderate Protectionist, so far as it went to encourage the industries of the colony and coal. He was very much interested in coal himself, and there was five tons in his own district for every ton there was at Westport. There had never been a bore put down in his district yet, but when a bore was put down they would find the reports of Sir James Hector and others borne out—namely, that the coal would not run out in a hundred years. He believed himself that it would not run out for thousands or even millions of years. As to the quality of this coal, he had got a sample of it in the waste-paper basket. It was analysed in the Laboratory the other day.

An Hon. MEMBER.—Is that coal?

Mr. E. M. SMITH said it was pitch-coal.

Mr. EARNSHAW rose to a point of order. He wished to ask if it was within the province of any honourable member to introduce articles for exhibition in the Chamber.

Mr. SPEAKER said it was quite proper to introduce interesting articles connected with our local industries to illustrate a speech.

Mr. E. M. SMITH thought he had as good a right to introduce articles into the House as had the electors of Dunedin. He would tell them what had been the effect of this coal on the railways. They succeeded in getting the Railway Commissioners to try a little of this coal. Prior to their coming into the market, the Commissioners were paying £1 12s. per ton for coal from Westport and Greymouth, but the moment the Commissioners began to use the Mokau coal on some work at Wanganui the price of coal fell to £1 1s. a ton; and competition would continue to bring down the price of coal. The honourable gentleman had stated that there were two or three more coal companies coming into existence. Well, he was very glad to hear it. The people would benefit by that. When he went to Westport and saw these grand deposits of coal, and when he knew that only a certain class of steamers could go in there for coal, and that those steamers must belong to a certain company, then he discovered why there was a monopoly in coal. Let them break down that monopoly. Let the Government, if they liked, resume possession of the coal-mines: then the people would get cheap coal. Of all the things that would be of most benefit to the people, good houses to live in and cheap fuel to cook their food would do them most good. Those were the things that would be most beneficial to the working-classes of the colony, and the aim they should have in view should be to cheapen the means of living, and bring the natural products within the reach of the people at a cheap rate. He had another mineral product with him. He had placed it in the lobby for honourable members to see. It was a piece of crude New Zealand iron; and when he brought it down to place in the lobby, so that the representatives of the people should see what they could do by developing their resources, he found the honourable member

representing Dunedin City getting up in his place and making statements that were utterly devoid of the least particle of truth, or that were contrary to fact.

Mr. SPEAKER said the honourable gentleman must not question the veracity of any member of the House. The honourable member must withdraw that expression.

Mr. E. M. SMITH would withdraw it. But what the honourable gentleman had stated was utterly contrary to fact. This was the first time during the four sessions he had been in Parliament that he had been ordered by Mr. Speaker to withdraw, and he would be very happy to do so then. The honourable member for Dunedin City made a statement contrary to fact, and one that could not be substantiated on investigation. He (Mr. Smith) was not in the House the other day when that honourable member delivered himself on the Financial Statement, but when he (Mr. Smith) went up to the Garden of New Zealand a few days ago his attention was called to the fact that the statement had been made during his absence.

Mr. SPEAKER said the honourable member could not refer to a previous debate of the present session.

Mr. E. M. SMITH said this happened in the last Parliament also. What they ought to do was to develop the coal and iron industries, and to make this great country what it ought to be, and then they would not be depending upon frozen meat, upon wool, tallow, and butter. They should work up the raw and natural products. That would give the colony a consuming population; and a country could not become great and prosperous without two classes—a consuming population and a producing population. Lord Rosebery, the present Prime Minister of England, agreed with this view: he took a tour round the world, and he was a very careful observer, like himself, and, being an Englishman, naturally when in England he was a Freetrader, but he said that if he resided in the colonies he would certainly be a moderate Protectionist. What they should aim at was Protection beyond the sea, to keep the cheap manufactures of the prisons of America, Germany, and other countries from coming into New Zealand; and they should aim at intercolonial free-trade in the colonies of Australasia. That was the way by which they could obtain prosperity. If the other colonies took our products we could take theirs, and he hoped the Government would appoint, during the recess, a conference on this subject, for if that were brought about very good results would be achieved. He hoped the House, comprising as it did a large number of men who represented the industrial classes of the community—farmers and working men of every grade—before the session closed, would lend him their able assistance, in order that he might reach the scientific men at Home and the large capitalists. If he could take Home some of the various minerals he had, and lay them on the table of the Imperial Institute, he could take such a hold that the country would ring with the news, for he could make it worth while

for capitalists to bring here millions of money. They had had an expert here—a Mr. Wales,—and he came from Wales, and represented a large mining company there; and he was perfectly astounded at the vast fields of coal and iron deposits, and was surprised to find that in a country like New Zealand, with such an energetic people, and with such a country to develop, so little was being done. Another gentleman said there was £180,000,000 of money lying idle in the Old Country. Well, if he were there he could shake some of these money-bags and bring them out to New Zealand. He had no desire to weary the House, but these were practical questions—these were questions that were going to make New Zealand. He was content with the Government. With the Minister of Lands to administer the land-laws, with his honourable friend the Premier the head of the Mines Department, he was sure there would be progress and prosperity. And then, again, the finances of the colony could not be in better hands than those of the Colonial Treasurer, and when his cheap-money scheme came into operation they could go in for developing the industries of the colony. All was going on very nicely, but they wanted a little assistance, and, if he got that assistance from the members of the House and the Parliament, when they met next year he should have the opportunity of receiving the congratulations of his brother-members, the representatives of the people of New Zealand. With these remarks, he would remind the House that he was going to vote against the amendment, which would be rejected, no doubt.

Mr. SEDDON said the amendment was moved, no doubt, with the view of bringing prominently before the House the position of the coal-mining industry in the colony. He sympathized very much with the honourable gentleman who had moved the amendment; because there was unfair competition as against our coal-mines, mine-owners, and coal-miners, inasmuch as the Newcastle coal was brought to New Zealand as ballast in vessels that came here for timber, and our steamers that went to the other colonies taking passengers loaded back with coal. At one time there was a strong contention in favour of coal being brought back as back-freight, but, unfortunately for this colony, for some time past, owing to the attitude taken up by the other colonies, they had blocked our products by tariffs prepared specially for the purpose of stopping New Zealand produce from going to the other colonies, and the result had been very much in favour of the other colonies and against New Zealand.

An Hon. MEMBER.—How?

Mr. SEDDON.—The honourable member asked "How?" In this way: that, while on paper it looked very well to compare the exports and imports, and the difference there was was slightly in favour of New Zealand, yet, if they deducted from the exports from New Zealand to the other colonies the specie and gold that had been shipped, then they would find there was a very large margin over £200,000 as

against New Zealand. To put them on an equal footing they ought to eliminate specie and gold, and then they would see that the result of the tariffs imposed by Victoria and New South Wales had been almost entirely to block New Zealand products in those two colonies. And those tariffs were made specially for that purpose. There was an attempt made to protect the farmers of Victoria and New South Wales against New Zealand, and the same was done also with regard to timber, a very heavy impost being put on for the specific purpose of blocking New Zealand timbers from entering Victoria and New South Wales. Now, he did not advocate retaliation. He thought that would be a mistake; but, if they continued to find, as they had now found by experience, that the tariffs of the other colonies were proving injurious, it was time that the New Zealanders awoke to the fact, and if our neighbours continued to behave selfishly, as they had behaved, then we must, in self-defence, do something to prevent what was now going on. The present moment, however, was, he thought, inopportune to do anything, and he would advise holding over any action they might take. There had been a change of Government in New South Wales, and the party that was now in power was the party which had opposed placing upon New Zealand products the very imposts placed upon them by the Dibbs Government. The Reid Government had only just succeeded to office, and the question was now, whether they should at the present juncture take the step that was indicated in this amendment. That was one reason why he should advocate delay for a short time. Then, again, they had set up a Committee to consider each and every question affecting the tariff; and it was a question, in his mind, whether it was wise for the House, at this moment, with the matter before the Committee, to force the hands of the Committee, as it were, by voting for this amendment. He would say this, however: that hitherto no opportunity had this session been given for the discussion of this question. He knew the position on the West Coast. Nearly half a million had been spent in harbour-works at Westport; £300,000 had been spent in harbour-works at Greymouth; and a large sum of money had been expended by coal-mine owners both at Westport and Grey Valley. The Blackball New Company, the Mokihinui Company—which company, he believed, was almost in liquidation—the Cardiff Company, at Westport, all complained of not being able to pay dividends to their shareholders, though the Westport Company, he must say, had expended a considerable amount of profit in improving the capital value of the property. In New Zealand they had very valuable coal-deposits, and had spent large sums of money—the money of the people—in developing the coal-mines; and yet they found their trade blocked by their neighbours. That was particularly the case in the North of Auckland. They found that the importation of Newcastle coal there affected the industry, so that the Huntly

Mr. E. M. Smith

Coal-mine for a long time had been almost unworked. He did not think they were even now working full time. This being the case, he thought the honourable member for the Buller deserved every credit for bringing the matter before the House, so that they might discuss it, and have an expression of opinion from honourable members on the subject. But what they wished to do to-night was to get into Supply. The longer they kept up this debate the later they perhaps would be sitting before they got the estimates through. Under these circumstances, there could not be any good object gained by prolonging the debate. It would be very much better that they should come to a division upon it. The Government being desirous of getting into Supply, and the matter now being before the Tariff Committee, they were bound to support the Colonial Treasurer, who had moved the motion to go into Committee of Supply. At the same time, if he were a private member and were giving an open vote on this question, he should vote with the honourable member for the Buller, believing as he did that something must be done on this very important question. Probably it would be much better done by having a conference, and letting it be understood that this colony did not intend to allow itself to be played with any longer. Not long ago, when his colleague was over in Australia, he was empowered by the Cabinet to arrange for reciprocity with any one of the other colonies, or with the whole of them. At that time there was no response; but matters had gone on, and the colony had been injured considerably, and he did not think this should go on much longer. But before any drastic steps were taken he thought it would be wise to await developments that were taking place both in Victoria and in New South Wales. In the meantime, so that the matter should not be prejudiced, it would be inadvisable, he thought, that the House should come to any conclusion such as that asked for in the amendment. At the same time, it must be recognised that the honourable member for the Buller had moved the amendment in the interests of his constituency, and, as he believed, in the interests of the colony, and, though they might on this occasion dissent from the proposal, all the same they must acknowledge that it was a matter worthy of the attention of honourable members on both sides of the House. On behalf of the Government, he had to say that it would be well if they could bring this debate to a close and get into Supply, so as to deal with the estimates.

Mr. T. MACKENZIE was sorry to think that the Premier had not dealt with this matter in a manner worthy of the position he occupied in the House. He had trifled with the question, and had played round it. He had counselled delay, and at the same time had stated that if they were dealing with the question on its merits he should vote with the honourable member for the Buller to put a duty on coal at once. Now, he considered that they ought to permit coal to come into this colony free.

The honourable member for Taranaki talked about working up the raw materials of the country, and making New Zealand a great manufacturing centre; but if the Government once interfered with a free supply of fuel, which was one of the greatest factors in the development of the industries of the country, it would do a suicidal thing. As they were placed in this colony just now, they had a number of coal companies which were really bleeding the people in the country with the prices they were charging for coal—prices which were altogether ridiculous; and, instead of trying to trammel the import of coal, the honourable gentleman ought to give the freest liberty to its free introduction. He supposed they could not get good coal in Wellington for less than £1 10s. a ton.

An Hon. MEMBER.—£1 16s.

Mr. T. MACKENZIE said, And yet they had a plentiful supply of coal all over the colony. If they could not dig up and supply themselves, something was very radically wrong. In the district he came from they had mountains of coal, and they had only to dig into it to get it in any quantity. Some of the coal companies in this colony had accumulated vast wealth from the monopoly they enjoyed. And yet, in order to pander to some of his West Coast constituents, the Premier came to the front and actually professed to support a motion of this kind. It was not worthy of the honourable gentleman, and he was sorry to see him taking a course of that kind. In fact, it often happened, when it came to a matter of assisting a district from which he got political support, there was the strongest inclination on the part of the honourable gentleman to do all he could in that direction. The Premier was actually professing to countenance the imposition of a duty upon wheat. What a travesty on Liberalism, putting duties on food and firing! For one season alone they might perhaps have a plethora of wheat, but in twenty seasons out of twenty-one they had a great surplus to export; and the honourable gentleman thought it was now the right thing to do to tax wheat. Farmers, however, were not to be caught with chaff. The whole thing was unworthy of honourable gentlemen who supported such an idea. The House should emphatically vote against a motion of this character, and in doing so it would vote in the interests of the colony, and in the interests of the poorer classes, who were now paying a ridiculous price for coal.

Mr. O'REGAN rose to oppose the amendment, and in doing so he did not wish it to be understood that he opposed it through any disrespect to the honourable gentleman who had brought it forward. The honourable gentleman was slightly incorrect in his opening remarks, for he told the House that in the new policy of New South Wales no mention was made of the question of reciprocity. If the honourable gentleman said the word "reciprocity" was not used he was perfectly correct; but if he said the tariff was not referred to he was incorrect, for if he read the telegrams he would learn

that one of the things which the new Cabinet was pledged to was to remit the tariff brought down by the Dibbs Government. That nefarious tariff was carried in 1891. It was carried by stealing a march upon the public, and even then by a bare majority. The result of the late elections showed very clearly what the feeling of the people was, because they had returned a majority pledged to direct taxation and the remission of those duties. And it was worthy of remark that the late elections were the first in which the people had really been consulted. It was the first election conducted on the basis of "one man one vote," and on that account a double significance attached to the result. The honourable member for Caversham was evidently an enthusiast: he would be sorry to call him a "faddist," because that was an ungenerous term to use. The honourable member, however, was in favour of Protection, but he was rather moderate. He wanted a small duty imposed upon coal. Now, he (Mr. O'Regan) would ask, what would that mean? The avowed object was to keep the foreign article out of the country. The anomaly of a Protective tariff was this: that in so far as it was protective it was prohibitory. If it was for revenue purposes only, it must not keep foreign goods out. The price of coal would be raised if a duty were imposed upon the imported article, and the honourable gentleman would be more logical if he advocated a prohibitive tariff altogether, because the imposition of a small duty would not only not keep out foreign coal, but would increase the price of coal to the people. He wondered if those gentlemen who favoured such a duty would consider it a good thing if ships coming from the neighbouring colonies here laden with coal were to get wrecked. He believed they would think that it would be a calamity; yet upon the protective theory they should think it a bad thing for this coal to come to the colony, and they would be compelled to consider it a good thing if such ships sank, or if some pirate got hold of them. If they were correct in saying that it would be a bad thing if the goods contained in these ships came into the colony, then they must say that shipwreck would be a very good thing, as it would prevent the goods from being introduced. The Premier drew a very doleful picture of the condition of some of the coal companies, and it appeared to him as though the honourable gentleman was sitting upon a rail in connection with this matter. He said the Government were against the proposition, yet the amendment was justified, and under certain circumstances the proposition of the honourable member for the Buller would be necessary. Well, he (Mr. O'Regan) failed to see, for one, why the whole people of New Zealand should be taxed for the purpose of keeping a company out of liquidation, or of providing profits for companies of any kind. He was a Free-trader, and whether inside or outside the House he would always steer by the pole-star of Free-trade, and he would never depart from that course. It was a crying shame, a libel upon the intelligence of the people, to see how the leaders of the people were

Mr. O'Regan

defending this nefarious proposition of Protection. There was no more justification for this war of tariffs than there was for the maintenance of a standing army, and to talk about intercolonial free-trade was an idle chimera while they existed. It was to the interest of all the colonies to be federated: but how were they to have federation while these tariffs were maintained? And if these gentlemen would put their foot down upon these tariffs they would do great good to all the colonies interested, instead of pandering to this degrading delusion of Protection. There was a very widespread fallacy among the people here and elsewhere that because other people cut off their noses we should cut off ours, and that because they put import duties upon our goods we must retaliate by treating them in the same manner as they treat us. He could prove the utter want of logic in this contention, but he would content himself by reading an extract from a standard work, "Protection or Free-trade," by the most illustrious expounder of the principle, Henry George. He might tell the House that this book had been printed in the American Congressional Record, or *Hansard*, and it was through that fact that the Free-trade party were able to carry the last Presidential election in the United States. And he would remind honourable members that the adoption of Free-trade by the United States would be of great benefit to New Zealand. They had all been looking to the admission of wool free into the American States, and they were well aware of the benefit that it would confer upon them. The following was the extract which he wished to read upon the question of retaliation:—

"Suppose that a farmer who has an improved variety of potatoes learns that a neighbour has wheat of such superior kind that it will yield many more bushels than that he has been sowing. He might naturally go to his neighbour, and offer to exchange seed-potatoes for seed-wheat. But if the neighbour, while willing to sell the wheat, should refuse to buy the potatoes, would not our farmer be a fool to declare, 'Since you will not buy my superior potatoes I will not buy your superior wheat'? Would it not be a very stupid retaliation for him to go on planting poorer seed and getting poorer crops?"

"Or, suppose, isolated from the rest of mankind, half a dozen men so situated, and so engaged, that mutual exchange constantly prompts them to exchange productions with one another. Suppose five of these six to be under the dominion of some curious superstition which leads them when they receive anything in exchange to burn one-half of it up before carrying home the other half. This would indirectly be to the injury of the sixth man, because by thus lessening their own wealth his five neighbours would lessen their ability to exchange with him. But would he be better himself if he were to say, 'Since these fools will insist upon burning half of all they get in exchange, I must, in self-defence, follow their example, and burn half of all I get'?"

"The condition and scheme of things in this world in which we find ourselves for a few years is such that no one can do either good or evil to himself alone. No one can release himself from the influence of his surroundings, and say, 'What others do is nothing to me,' nor yet can any one say, 'What I do is nothing to others.' Nevertheless it is in the tendency of things that he who does good most profits by it, and he who does evil injures most of all himself. And those who say that a nation should adopt a policy essentially bad because other nations have embraced it are as unwise as those who say, 'Lie, because others are false; be idle, because others are lazy; refuse knowledge, because others are ignorant.'"

He thought that answered completely the absurd cry they heard reiterated time after time that because the Australian Colonies were stupid enough to impose duties on our goods therefore we should impose duties on theirs. The difference in the price of coal was of great importance to the people of New Zealand, and the Premier should consider that those vessels which brought coal as ballast were thereby enabled to take away our goods, which under other circumstances they would be compelled to leave behind. And if we increased the price of coal, what did we do? We discouraged every industry in which the use of coal was a valuable adjunct, and many industries could not be carried on unless coal was obtainable at a cheap rate. Therefore coal should be made as cheap as possible. He took it, those who deserved the most consideration were the poor—those who were depending upon their labour, and who had nothing else to depend upon. That was the class that deserved most attention, because it was at the base of all society, and any legislation which was for the benefit of the working-classes was not class legislation. What was the position of a working-man with a wife and family, with coal at £1 16s. a ton, with casual employment, and wages constantly getting lower? He saw the other day that the woollen-mills at Pitone were going to reduce their wages; yet they found Liberals proposing to increase the price of coal to the poor, whose wages under so-called Protection were being steadily and stealthily lessened. It was a most iniquitous and scandalous proposal, and, so long as strength was left to him, he would denounce it. With all their boasts about the prosperity of the colony, they knew that things were in a far worse condition than outsiders believed them to be. Only yesterday he read a telegram in the *Evening Post* to the effect that a clergyman who had been twenty years in Napier said that in all his experience he had never seen such distress as at the present time, and the reverend gentleman drew the deduction that in a young country where this state of things could happen there must be something radically wrong. There was something wrong; yet, instead of our Liberals coming forward and facing the wrong, and endeavouring to remedy it, they were found trying to make dearer than ever to the people the price of the

barest necessities. He would always oppose any motion of the kind.

Mr. THOMPSON wished, although the Government were anxious to get into Supply, to say a few words on this question. The last two speakers had endeavoured to make the House believe that if the importation of coal were stopped it would raise the price of coal. He thought he would be able to convince the House that it would do nothing of the kind. The only place where coal was cheap was in the Province of Auckland, and that was where two-thirds of the coal imported from Newcastle was brought; so that the argument of those honourable gentlemen fell to the ground. How was it that coal was double the price it ought to be in Wellington? Simply because there was a monopoly in Wellington, and so long as that existed coal would be at a high price. He took it, the question they required to consider was this: Were they to find employment for their miners or see them walking about the roads idle? He was not prepared to advocate a high duty on coal; he believed the Government could meet the difficulty by arranging the tariff in some way; and it was the first duty of Government to give working-men the opportunity of earning their own living without falling back on the Government for charitable aid. And that was the position of the miners—in fact, of nearly all the working-classes—in the colony. Another view of the question was that not only were the miners kept idle half their time, but the railways that were constructed for the express purpose of conveying coal to the ports were also idle half the time. That was not right, and he trusted that some steps would be taken by the Government to meet the difficulty. The condition in Auckland at present was deplorable. He had been living twenty-five years in Auckland, and he had never known anything approaching the distress at present existing amongst the working-classes, and particularly amongst the miners, because they could not move about any distance away from the mines to look for work. They were kept hanging about waiting for another day's work, with the result that they were reduced absolutely to a state of pauperism. That should not be allowed. Then, take the Waikato railway-line. What was the result of the importation of Newcastle coal? They were losing thousands of pounds every year on that line through allowing coal to be imported. And if they stopped Newcastle coal from coming to New Zealand it would not add sixpence per ton to the price in the colony. Competition was so keen, and so many mines would be opened in different parts of the colony, that there was no risk of the price of coal being raised. In fact, here in Wellington, where there was every chance of importation, coal was 10s. or 15s. a ton higher than it ought to be. He hoped that, if the Government did attempt to make any alteration in the tariff, some means would be found to meet this difficulty in the coal trade. The honourable gentleman seemed to run away with the idea that there was no coal anywhere but on the West Coast. They had

as good coal in Auckland as there, and the coal-owners were prepared to supply the market at a low rate. But it was very hard to see vessels coming in and flooding the place with inferior coal from Newcastle while our miners were walking about the streets. He trusted, the honourable gentleman having brought this matter before the House, that the Government would take some steps in the matter. He did not suppose there would be any practical issue now, but it was the means of bringing the matter pointedly before the public. He would, however, impress upon the House that there was not the slightest danger—not the remotest possibility—of the stoppage of Newcastle coal raising the price of coal in New Zealand. He believed, in fact, that if they stopped the importation of coal it would give such an impetus to mining in New Zealand that coal would come to a uniform price in the colony and the present monopoly would be broken up, because the mine-owners in the North would be encouraged to go to more expense to obtain vessels to run the coal down to Wellington for competition. He believed, therefore, they would have a uniform price all over the colony, and that the coal would be worked by our own working-men. At the present time things were in a deplorable state, and he hoped this discussion would be the means of impressing upon the Government the necessity for grappling with the evil.

Mr. WARD thought the amendment of the honourable gentleman, and the discussion they were having on it, would do good. He quite agreed with the last speaker in his remarks in regard to the price of coal being likely to be raised when Newcastle coal was stopped from coming in. His own opinion was that if a duty were placed upon Newcastle coal the price of coal in the colony would not increase. On the contrary, he believed the price would decrease, provided they had free and open competition between the various coal-mines. There appeared to be an impression in the minds of one or two honourable members who had addressed the House that the only colony which ought to be considered in discussing the matter of tariff between the various colonies was New South Wales. There was an impression that, because a Government which promised to advocate Free-trade in that colony had been recently elected, we should defer for some time any proposed increases on any articles we were in the habit of supplying to the colony until we knew what their policy was going to be. He desired to point out that other colonies which were interested in the introduction of reciprocal tariffs between this colony and them had almost a prohibitive duty against our export articles. One of the colonies which was a very great exporter of wheat—South Australia—was that which at present was disturbing the minds of many settlers in this colony by sending considerable parcels of wheat to our shores; and, in discussing any reciprocity which it might in future be desirable to establish between New Zealand and the other colonies, they had to bear in mind that

Mr. Thompson

four of the large exporting colonies, which exported considerable quantities of the same produce we exported, exhibited towards us a tariff which was hostile. If the proposal, or if the idea, of his honourable friend the member for Inangahua—that of complete Free-trade—could be established it would, he thought, be undoubtedly a good thing in many respects, provided it was done on fair lines between the whole of the colonies. But was the honourable gentleman prepared to forego £1,600,000 of Customs revenue in order to have his ideas carried out?

Mr. O'REGAN.—Yes.

Mr. WARD thought they ought to have, then, a very good substitute in the way of providing a sufficient amount of revenue, before they entertained any such drastic proposal. And he believed, while the honourable gentleman was desirous of doing what he could to ameliorate the condition of the poor, if his proposal were given effect to in this colony the poor would become poorer, and a larger number of people would be thrown out of employment; and those deplorable cases which the clergyman at Napier indicated would be largely added to were we at present not to protect somewhat the industries of the colony. He thought they should, as New South Wales was a large consuming colony, wait for a time in order to see what their policy was to be before agreeing to the proposal of his honourable friend. He might say that hitherto he had been averse to an increase of duty on the coal imported into this colony, and he saw no reason to change his opinion at present, but, in his opinion, if the hostile tariffs which the other colonies had had for years—for the last two years particularly—were to continue against New Zealand—if our main exports were to be shut out from those colonies—it would become our bounden duty to the producers of this colony, as a matter of self-defence, to put high duties against those colonies—not only upon coal, but upon any other articles they were in the habit of bringing to this colony. This might be called retaliation. Call it retaliation or anything you liked, he did not care what it might be called, but the circumstances in which the colony found itself placed should be our guide, and that was what should regulate their future action in regard to this matter. This matter of the coal tariff was at present before the Tariff Committee. Before that Committee reported he wished to say that in his opinion the Government should endeavour to extract from the other colonies an indication of what their intentions towards this colony were to be, and by the indication from them of their future action we should be guided in our action in relation to this matter and others affecting the well-being of this colony. There was one remark which fell from the honourable member for Clutha relative to what he stated was his (Mr. Ward's) attitude upon the proposal to put a duty against imported wheat. He wished to say this was a very important and, he admitted, a very delicate and intricate matter to deal with. There were more interests to consider

than those of the producers in the country; there was the consumer's interest in the cities and in the portions of the country where no wheat was grown. The Government, whatever action they might take, must carefully weigh, before deciding to impose a duty on imported wheat, what effect it would have on the price of bread. This was a very difficult matter to deal with. The Government were not going to do anything which, with the peculiar circumstances at the present time, might have the effect of causing an increase in the cost of one of the necessary articles of daily life. At the same time, he thought honourable members should carefully consider what the position was, and he would endeavour to point out, so far as he could, what it was. There had undoubtedly, throughout the civilised world, been a great depreciation in the value of wheat, and in many of the staple products of this country, unfortunately. This depreciation in the value of wheat, which was regulated by the cost in the London market, had affected the whole of the other colonies equally with, and in many cases more so than, ourselves. They had to look to Europe for the consumption of the surplus available wheat, and so had we. If we saw at the present time that Victoria, New South Wales, Queensland, South Australia, and Tasmania had prohibitive duties against our export surplus of wheat, which prevented us from doing a share of the business we might under ordinary circumstances do with those colonies, we had to ask ourselves whether it was right that the growers of wheat in this colony should be placed in the unfair position of having a lower tariff against the available exports of those colonies, while we all had to depend upon the European market for the consumption of our surplus. In his opinion it was the business of this colony to carefully consider the effect that the importation of wheat into New Zealand was going to have on the value of wheat grown in this colony. He had no hesitation, speaking for himself, in saying if he, at any rate, had his way, and found that through the continued importation of wheat into New Zealand there was going to be a depreciation in the value of the local article, affecting the producers of the country, he would himself favour an increase in the duty on wheat. Neither did he believe such a duty on the importation of wheat would, were it necessary in self-defence, be the means of causing an increase in the value of bread.

Hon. MEMBERS.—Oh, oh!

Mr. WARD would endeavour to explain why. At the present time it was below 3s. a bushel. Now, how much below 3s. a bushel would wheat require to fall before they could induce the bakers in the colony to reduce the price of a 4lb. loaf 3d. or 1d. per loaf? He said, whenever it might be necessary in the future—should it ever be necessary in the future—to regulate the importation of wheat into this colony the Government would have to be careful to see that the baking community could not take advantage of it to raise the price of the

4lb. loaf or 2lb. loaf. And he said, although other members of the House might differ, if the necessity should arise for the protection of the producers and of the wheat-growers of this colony—if it became necessary to do this—he believed it could be done without causing inflated prices for bread in New Zealand. And he would go further and say that if it should have the effect of causing an increase in the price of bread he should be strongly

opposed to it. It seemed an extraordinary fact that, while Newcastle coal was selling at a lower price than for some years past at the port of shipment, in the City of Wellington a very high price was being charged. It was an anomaly, perhaps, peculiar to Wellington, that one could not understand. If high levels for coal for ordinary consumption were maintained here without any necessity, they would be maintained no matter what we did so far as Newcastle coal was concerned, because it appeared that there must be some combination established for the purpose of keeping up the price. He would not object if there were reasonable grounds for it, and if the price was fair, but it seemed that the price of coal in this city was not what it ought to be. He did not know whether the honourable member for the Buller was going to take a division upon this matter, and particularly as he had had a fair discussion upon it. The object he had in view would have been served by the debate having been taken in the House. In the meantime he would oppose the amendment, as it was the intention of the Government to get further information as to whether it would be in the interests of the colony that their own people should be assisted by a reasonable tax being imposed as against the other colonies.

Mr. G. HUTCHISON considered the statements made that evening by the Premier and the Colonial Treasurer must cause very great regret throughout the colony. It was no doubt the desire of the Government to get into Supply to pass their estimates, but that was a mere temporary and insignificant consideration compared with the subject opened up by the amendment. Yet the Premier had stated that but for the desire of the Government to go on with the estimates, and but for the fact—also transitory and comparatively unimportant—that the subject of the tariff was now before a Committee, the Ministry would be found supporting the amendment of the honourable member for the Buller. That was a most serious and dangerous condition for the colony to be placed in. What was the meaning of the amendment? It was to put a prohibitive duty upon Newcastle and other coals imported into the colony; and the honourable gentleman had the assurance to urge that such a duty would not have the effect of raising the price of the local article.

An Hon. MEMBER.—Neither would it.

Mr. G. HUTCHISON was astonished to hear any honourable gentleman state such a thing. The whole experience of centuries—the whole teaching of civilisation—contradicted the asser-

tion. The testimony of every Government in England within the last fifty years proved that such a duty must inevitably increase the price to the consumer. If it were to improve the lot of the labourer engaged in the particular industry to be protected something might be said for the change, but it would not even do that. So long as there was dearth of employment in other branches of trade, numbers would flock to the protected industries and force down the rate of wages. A duty such as proposed—amounting to a prohibitory tariff—would only improve the lot of a comparatively few of the population of New Zealand, and these the least deserving of consideration. The honourable member for Marsden had stated that in the North, where two-thirds of the coal used was imported from Newcastle, coal was cheaper than anywhere else in the colony. What was the reason? Simply that there was imported coal there; and he would ask the honourable gentleman, what would be the result if Newcastle coal were not imported there? It would inevitably be that the price of local coal would be raised. In the central parts of New Zealand there was an anomalous difference between the cost and the price of coal. The price charged in Wellington, for instance, was certainly scandalous, and he feared it would become more so if the West Coast coal alone had to supply the market. He had a letter from the secretary of a co-operative society in Wellington, an extract from which he would read to the House, showing the state of things here at present. This was what it said:—

"A local coal dealer, —, tendered to supply members of the association (numbering 200 odd members) with coals at the following prices: Coalbrookdale, £1 13s.; Newcastle, £1 8s. per ton net cash. Upon this becoming known to the coal ring they gave — notice that unless he at once reverted to the ring prices (£1 18s. Coalbrookdale, and £1 16s. Newcastle) they would immediately cut off his supply; consequently he has had to surrender his contract."

That was the position now with practically free-trade in coal. It would be ten times worse if this prohibitive duty were put on. But that was not the only serious aspect of this question. From the language of the Colonial Treasurer that evening, and from the hints he had dropped previously in the House, they were led to believe that there was an import duty threatened upon cereals. The Colonial Treasurer had discussed the question in his usual sippant manner, and had stated that if the duties on cereals were increased there would be no increase in the price of bread. That was an assertion which experience point-blank controverted, and he was very sorry the honourable gentleman should take up such a position and make such absurd statements. The other day, in answer to a question put by the honourable member for Inangahua, the Colonial Treasurer had said that the question was under consideration as to whether the producers of cereals would

be benefited by a duty upon wheat, which, to the extent of one hundred and fifty thousand sacks, was now held in the colony.

Mr. WARD.—In one district.

Mr. G. HUTCHISON.—That there are more only makes the matter worse. Let the House consider what would be the effect of an import duty on wheat. It would immediately raise the price of the wheat in the hands of those who were now holding the grain from last harvest—held for the most part, he believed, by middlemen. It would certainly make bread dear to the working-men of the colony. The Government were not only going to tax the poor man's fuel, but they were now going to tax his bread. It was a terrible state of things that a Government that had flaunted a cheap-money scheme should, almost in the same breath, practically propose to raise the price of bread. Let the issue go to the colony between prohibitory duties and moderate Protection. He himself, as some honourable members who were then in Parliament knew, had supported the tariff of 1888, but only for revenue purposes; and he had opposed several items in that tariff which went in the direction of taxing the necessities of life. They had it from the Government that our finances were strong, and that the revenue was likely to come in so as to realise the estimates of the Treasurer; yet they were asked to put prohibitive duties upon two of the most essential articles of daily consumption. The matter was very serious, and the sooner the colony realised it the better. The debate had been a most significant one, and it would tend to open the eyes of the people of the colony to the danger they were threatened with from the policy indicated by the honourable gentlemen on the Treasury benches. The Premier would justify the motion as being retaliatory, but it was suicidal. The two colonies referred to—Victoria and New South Wales—had already seen the mischief of the career they had entered upon a few years ago in imposing prohibitive duties, for they were suffering now in consequence.

Mr. SEDDON.—We have suffered to the extent of half a million by their duties.

Mr. G. HUTCHISON said, if New Zealand had suffered to the extent of half a million, that was no excuse for going in for a war of retaliation against those colonies, which would in various ways cost this colony many millions. What they had to consider was the promotion of the staple articles of export, such as mutton and wool chiefly, and, to some extent, timber. How were these to be encouraged and assisted and made self-reliant, in the face of this motion, if it were carried? The proposal was monstrous, and carried ruin on its very face. Let the colony preserve the measure of prosperity it had, and increase that prosperity by possible means. To that end let the colony, at all events, refuse to tax what drives the wheels of industry and what made her workers strong.

Mr. McLACHLAN would not have risen to speak in this debate had it not been that the interest which he mainly represented was threatened with a serious attack by the im-

Mr. G. Hutchison

position of a duty on coal. Before he spoke on the coal-mines he would make some reference to the remarks which fell from the Colonial Treasurer with regard to the extent to which the colony was suffering through its products being shut out from the neighbouring colonies. The honourable gentleman probably knew better than he (Mr. McLachlan) did what the effect was upon this colony through its products being shut out from New South Wales and the other colonies. But the honourable gentleman could not convince him we had lost very much through our cereals being excluded from the Australian colonies, unless it was oats. As far as wheat was concerned, he happened to come from a part of the colony where it was generally grown and exported, and, in fact, he had been a seller of wheat for the last thirty years, and, without exception, every year he had sold various kinds of grain to the dealers, and amongst them wheat. When he went to Christchurch, to G. G. Stead's or to Peter Cunningham's, and showed his sample, he did not ask them where they were going to send it. He simply submitted the sample, and if they bought they shipped to England or to Australia, and he got from them the same price wherever they sent it. Therefore the fact had no weight with him whether the wheat was sent to London or to Australia. That was all he had to say with respect to cereals. Another article that was produced in his district was pigs. He came from the Cincinnati of New Zealand. It was, in fact, a land of pigs, as John T. Matson had designated it. Now, notwithstanding the import duties imposed by the Australian Colonies, they were doing now much better with their pigs than in former years. In fact, they had few pigs to send the Australians if there were a market for them there. As regarded what had fallen from the honourable member for Maraden concerning Auckland and the coal-business there, the honourable gentleman must remember that Auckland was not the whole of New Zealand. He said that, although a considerable quantity of coal was produced there, a large proportion of that article came from Newcastle. Well, they had coal-mines of their own, and could supply themselves; but the honourable gentleman must remember that in that part of Canterbury from which he came—he was the representative of a district that had in constant use over two hundred traction-engines, the owners of which would have to pay a higher price for the coal if a duty were imposed upon it—the farmers were already seriously handicapped by the low price of grain, and they would be further handicapped if they were to be made to pay an increased price on the coal consumed by the traction-engines. Now, there was another thing the proposer of the amendment had not put before the House, but which had been mentioned in the House—that was, the proposed duty, or suggested duty, on wheat and flour coming to New Zealand. He did not know whether he saw better than other honourable members, but he reckoned he saw things just as well, and he might point out

that it was the millers in the South who would reap almost every advantage that was to be derived from this duty if it were imposed, because before the harvest came round—which was a matter of five or six months—these men could get rid of their wheat at a much higher price than they had paid for it. The Timaru Milling Company, for instance, held enormous stocks of wheat, and the imposition of an import duty would not have the effect of bringing down the prices that were now ruling, but would rather have a contrary effect. The farmer who sold his wheat would not get any more for it. When the harvest came round the farmers of Timaru would sell their wheat for export to Australia or England. Above all persons in the world the farmers ought to resist this duty, because they had the privilege—he called it a privilege advisedly—in this colony, through the wisdom of past Parliaments, of importing agricultural implements duty-free. They imported last year—and that was not the best year, he supposed—over seventy-five thousand pounds' worth of agricultural implements. Now, if the farmers, or the representatives of the farmers in that House, favoured a protective duty on coal, it would follow as a natural consequence that there would be an attempt on the part of the representatives of the manufacturing towns to gain for themselves a further protection on the articles which they wished to manufacture. He did not believe in evading these points; they must meet them fairly and squarely; and he said, if he accepted a duty on wheat in the interests of his constituents, and refused a further duty on articles that might be manufactured in this country, or were intended to be manufactured here, but could not be manufactured in consequence of the competition with these free imports, he would not be acting consistently unless he supported it. It was not this £75,000 that represented all the interest. There was a bigger interest than that. There were big works in Dunedin, and probably also in Christchurch, Auckland, and Wellington, where they manufactured agricultural implements, and had no protection whatever, but manufactured in fair competition with foreign manufactures. It would not be unreasonable to conceive that through a combination they might have a duty of 10, 15, or 20 per cent. imposed upon these articles that were now manufactured free, and the effect of this combination would be to raise the prices of these articles, and thus further to handicap the farmers who used these implements. Viewing it from that point of view, he considered it would be suicidal to his constituents were they to put a duty on coal or wheat or anything else that was going to handicap that industry. Now, this was an act of reprisal or retaliation against some colony that had put a duty upon our products. He questioned whether there was any wheat coming to this colony from Victoria; he might be wrong, but he did not think so.

An Hon. MEMBER.—From South Australia.

Mr. McLACHLAN.—From South Australia? Well, that made the matter all the worse, for

South Australia imposed no duty upon the products of this colony. It had free-trade in corn and coal.

Mr. WARD.—No.

Mr. McLACHLAN.—Did the Colonial Treasurer say that South Australia placed a duty on the import of wheat?

Mr. WARD.—Yes, 2s. a cental.

Mr. McLACHLAN did not know that. He said it was very foolish on the part of South Australia—a colony that produced wheat in such abundance and of such excellence—to put a duty upon the import of wheat. He could not conceive it. Now, with regard to coal, he knew that the Colonial Treasurer liked to go with business, and he would like, therefore, to offer him the suggestion that, if for years past there had been such a splendid opportunity in Wellington for building up a coal-business, the honourable gentleman would do well to start a coal-yard here. He hoped, therefore, the honourable gentleman would start a coal-yard, and afford the public an opportunity of buying coal at a fair price. In fact, any member of the House could start in that business.

Mr. CROWTHER understood that this debate had taken a different turn from that which was intended when it began. Of course he thought it had taken a very proper turn. They had heard very much said since half-past seven in justification of retaliation. What was retaliation? Was there in their private life any act or any business transaction which was in operation between them that did not contain more or less of retaliation? The foundation of their business was built on retaliation. They considered what business they were doing with such and such a person, upon what favourable terms they were doing it, and just in accordance with the extent of that business they were prepared to make allowances, or the reverse. The same thing exactly applied as between New Zealand and the neighbouring colonies. Now, they knew beyond all doubt that it was utterly impossible for our industries, such as that of coal-producers in the North Island, to be a success so long as Newcastle coal was allowed to be landed at our ports duty-free. They had experience of this, for they had been suffering in that direction for years. They had expended thousands and thousands of pounds in prospecting for coal. They had found it; and when they did find it they could not work it so as to pay the miners a fair wage for their work, and, at the same time, pay interest on the money they had to invest to get the coal to the retailer. They were continually blocked up by the constant arrival of coal from Newcastle. That being the case in the North Island, and seeing that very little Newcastle coal went to Wellington, there was no necessity whatever for importation of Newcastle coal, or for its going either to Christchurch or to Dunedin, or any further south, because Westport was quite competent to meet all demands, and, as stated by the Premier, there were all those other collieries that were absolutely ready to spring into existence if it could be made worth

Mr. McLachlan

their while. He took it that all this showed beyond all doubt that there was no necessity whatever for Newcastle coal to come either to Wellington or any further down south, and, in fact, we had no need for it in the colony. What did it mean? The Colonial Treasurer had told them that he thought this debate would be an indication as to what was intended. Now, it was his (Mr. Crowther's) opinion that it was an indication. He did not approve of the suggestion to levy a 5s.-per-ton duty upon coal: that would be equal to about 25 per cent., and was too much; but he thought it was an indication that they should be prepared at once to levy a duty of 2s. 6d. a ton on the imported coal. He would be quite willing to do that, seeing that every ton of potatoes that went from New Zealand to New South Wales had to pay a duty of 10s., and that every ton of butter, cheese, hams, or bacon that was sent there was subjected to a duty. Why should that continue? As the Colonial Treasurer had said, from one year's end to another we kept on indicating what we desired to do, but we had not the courage or the strength to do it. He thought honourable members would surely consider the time had arrived when, at any rate, we could afford to take this very small stand and say, "We can do without your coals, and if they do come here they will have to pay a duty of at least 2s. 6d. a ton." The time had arrived for that, he believed. They had carefully considered the matter, and there was no need for hesitating any longer. As

9.0. the Colonial Treasurer had told them that night, it was not only coal but wheat and everything else coming in. And the settlers whom this cheap-money scheme was to put on the land when they got there would have to enter into competition and fight against it. How could they get for the articles they produced sufficient to pay interest on the money they would borrow from the Government? That meant that they would be continuously coming to the Government to have the rates of interest reduced, which meant, again, that they would be saddling heavier burdens on the taxpayers, because they would have to increase the indebtedness of the colony by going in for further borrowing. He should be very much pleased to see honourable members take a stand and say they had waited long enough, and say at once they were going to levy half a crown a ton on all coal imported into the colony.

Mr. BELL hardly thought the Premier or the Colonial Treasurer could be taken as serious when they said that night that they were anxious to get into Supply, and, in the same voice, delivered from those benches a statement of a policy which they must have known it would be necessary for those differing from them to protest against. They had been listening that night to arguments on the principle of Free-trade against Protection. It was quite impossible to enter into a complete discussion of those principles, but he should have thought that no Minister in any British community would have ventured in these days to

advocate a return to the corn laws. He could not conceive that such a policy could ever recommend itself to the people of any English-speaking country. It was to him absolutely alarming to think that a Minister who was leading the strongest majority that had ever governed the Parliament of this country should find it consonant with the sentiments of his followers to make such a declaration of policy from the Government benches. He did not himself believe that the Minister voiced the feeling of the country. He hoped and prayed that it was not so. There could be no greater misery for any country than to return to that which England got rid of when it repealed the corn-laws, and finally abolished the last taxation on the bread of the people. The nonsense that had been talked about the tariff not increasing the price to the consumer was to him so absurd that it was almost impossible for him to find an answer. Why, the answer was to be found in every elementary treatise on the subject; and the same argument applied to coal. Bread was used by every person in the colony, and coal by every person in the towns. The honourable member for Marsden said—it was not so serious as the opinions that came from the Government benches—that the way to defeat a monopoly was to prevent competition; that if you are to defeat a monopoly in coal you must prohibit the competition of other countries with that monopoly; and in order to provide work for the miners they must impose an import duty upon coal, and in order to provide income for the farmers they must tax every man, woman, and child in the community. As he had said before, the answer was to be found in every elementary treatise on the subject. He did not want to go any further than to simply state the position, and to ask whether it was likely the people would tolerate it. But there was one thing that was worse than Protection in the arrangement of the tariff laws, and that one thing was retaliation, because it added—to the infinite wrong which a policy of Protection did—the element of hostility between nation and nation. What his honourable friend the member for Patea had said about the suicidal character of this policy was so transparently clear that it needed no further argument from him. The Hon. the Colonial Treasurer gave them the argument used by all Colonial Treasurers who defended the policy of Protection in the House: he asked how the honourable member for Inangahua was going to find the £1,600,000 which the Customs now provided. But the honourable member knew perfectly well that it was only because the tariff was not protective in the sense of being prohibitive that it gave any revenue at all; and it was of no use, when an honourable member protested against the further extension of a Protective tariff, to pretend that he would have to find a sum to make up the Customs revenue. There was no sense in that argument at all. It was absurd to say that a protest against a tax on corn or coal must be followed by a constructive policy to provide Customs revenue.

The honourable gentleman did not even pretend that it was for the purpose of obtaining revenue. Not at all. He was going to put these taxes upon cereals and coal for the purpose of providing a sop to the farmers with one hand, and a sop to the working-men with the other, and, again, to punish the Australian Colonies.

An Hon. MEMBER.—The farmers do not want it.

Mr. BELL was sure they did not want it; but those honourable gentlemen held it out because they thought they did. With the other hand he held out a bribe to the miners, for whom the honourable member for Marsden spoke. But there was a greater population than the population of the miners or the farmers, and that was the united population of the colony—the town and country combined. The town and country would eventually combine on this point, whatever might be the sentiment of the moment. He did not profess to voice the public sentiment; he could not doubt his honourable friend the Premier had more right to do so than he had, because he led a great majority which carried out the policy of the country for the time being. But he was voicing the sentiment which must prevail sooner or later. He said the combined voice of the population would set its final veto upon an attempt to tax the necessities of life. If he had heard one cry louder than another at the general election, if he had read one sentence more than another in the speeches of the successful candidates, it was this: "Lower the taxation upon the necessities of life." And now the policy of the Government was declared from the Government benches to begin by further taxing the necessities of life, and for some purpose of obtaining political support—possibly for some purpose in connection with the Tariff and Industries Committee—possibly for the purpose of pitting the town against the country—possibly with the object of consolidating the party in some way or another—the country was to be thus betrayed. Well, the Premier said that he (Mr. Bell) lectured, but at this moment, at all events, he was very far from any desire to do anything of that kind. He recognised what the proposal meant, and he deeply regretted it—so deeply that he was hardly able to find words to say what he thought. He saw arrayed against him a force led by an honourable gentleman who was leading this colony to inevitable ruin. He should always have this satisfaction if this great Government majority joined in carrying out this proposal: that he had from the first raised his voice in solemn protest against the ruin they were preparing for the country in which he was born and where he had hoped he might continue to live.

Mr. MCGOWAN just wished to say one or two words, because it appeared to him that the discussion had widened out in a direction which he thought the honourable gentleman who moved the amendment, and many other honourable members in the House, never expected, and he thought, himself, there was no necessity for it. The question of Free-trade

or Protection need not necessarily have come into this discussion; neither need they have gone the length of bringing in the question of reciprocity. He did not agree with the remark of the honourable gentleman who had just sat down when he endeavoured to show that the Government were taking up this position, and that he alone stood, as it were, a beacon to guide the people into the right course. It was not a Government question at all. The Government had never given any opinion on the question. The Premier only said what he might have done as a private individual. He was with the honourable gentleman in reference to the position he took up against an import duty upon coal, and he would shortly give his reasons. What did it amount to? Statements had been made in reference to the coal throughout New Zealand, but he thought honourable members hardly grasped the position, for there had been no clear explanation of the difference between the price of coal in one port and in another. It was just this importation of foreign coal that kept the price down in the northern part of the colony. If it were not for the Newcastle coal having been introduced into Auckland at a cheap rate, by vessels carrying timber, and by steamers trading backwards and forwards, and, probably, but for some of the small coal-mines in the district, there would very likely have been an advance of 8s., 5s., or 8s. a ton on the present price. They knew that the coal-mines had been worked upon close lines. Instead of making money the companies had been losing money. But that was beside the question. The real fact was that, if a duty were put upon coal, it meant that for the sake of getting 125,000 tons of coal they were going to put an increased price on 750,000 tons. And was that any good reason? No. The coal should be looked upon as one of the products of the country; and, if they could not produce coal in New Zealand so cheap as to compete successfully with other colonies, then they ought to turn their attention to something else in which they could succeed. Coal undoubtedly was, and should be considered, a raw product; it entered into the manufacture of almost everything; and to impose a duty upon it would be to play not into the hands of the miners, as was suggested, but into the hands of the coal-owners and coal trusts. He hoped the House would look a little beyond that. He recognised the prudence—he would not say the wisdom—of the honourable gentleman who introduced the proposal, so that his constituents might see that he was paying particular attention to their interests; but it behoved the colony and the members of that House to see that no such proposal was adopted, for it would entail much cost on the general consumer in order to benefit a few. That was really the point at issue in this matter. He would like to say that he thought they had unnecessarily introduced the question of Protection and Free-trade. Under certain circumstances Free-trade was the best protection that some countries could have, and under other circumstances Protection was the best mea-

Mr. McGowan

sure of Free-trade. He would explain this. Supposing that half a dozen settlers were located in a certain district in which there was a run free to all, and those half-dozen settlers turned out their cattle on to the land on which they all grazed; then, supposing two of them fenced in a portion to prevent the other people's cattle going upon it, what was the natural consequence? That the four, in order to protect themselves, must also fence their part; otherwise those who had their land unfenced would be at a great disadvantage, because they had failed to secure their own interests, and, while the others would have their own portion of land, and their cattle running at large, the rights of the four would be restricted. Under certain conditions it was quite necessary that we should have protection against those countries which had imposed duties upon our produce; but the wisest method of obtaining that would be by conference, and certainly not by the introduction of a duty upon wheat, or upon coal, which were primary products of the earth, and should be as free as possible for the use of mankind. He was sorry to hear one statement by the Colonial Treasurer, in which he said that, if this duty were put on, in reality it would not increase the price of bread. Now, the honourable gentleman must have known that that was specious reasoning, and would not stand examination. If they increased the price of an article, that increase of price must ultimately fall upon the consumer. It might be that the addition of 10s. or 5s. per ton to the price of flour would not in that particular instance raise the price of bread $\frac{1}{4}$ d. or $\frac{1}{2}$ d., but the time would come when there would be an increase, and the moment it came to the amount that would enable the baker to charge an increased price he would put it on. An increase of 1s. a hundred must bring $\frac{3}{4}$ d. increase on the 4lb. loaf.

Mr. SEDDON asked, how was it the bakers charged the same price that they did when they were paying nearly double the price for flour?

Mr. McGOWAN said it was a great pity that competition did not come in then; but that did not result from any duty—that simply was an accident of the position. At that particular time bakers were making an unfair profit, which they should not have made. It was a question then of supply and demand; but now, with the competition there was between the different industries, there could be little fear that the bakers or any other class of men in the colony who were producing material for men's use would get such prices as they might have had at one time. He intended to oppose the honourable gentleman's amendment.

Mr. MACKINTOSH said he rose to refer to one or two remarks by the honourable member for Wellington City, who said that there was great danger ahead when it came to this colony returning to the corn-laws. Would the imposition of an import duty on wheat, which would only be of a temporary character, be a return to the corn-laws? The corn-laws of

England, to which he referred, were imposed most undoubtedly for the benefit of the land-owners, in order that they might get high rents; but New Zealand was not a wheat-importing country but a wheat-exporting country. We exported largely; but it so happened that to a particular portion of this colony wheat was introduced from Australia, and it was allowed in free, while our produce when sent to Australia was taxed. It was in order to bring the other colonies to their senses that he should advocate the placing of an import duty upon wheat, and upon every other article that we could produce in this colony. We had waited a very considerable time to see whether there would be any approach towards intercolonial free-trade, but there was very little symptom of it; and were we to go on receiving coal and produce from Australia free while the Australian Colonies taxed our produce? It was a question of policy as to which would bring about a change the quickest—that we should submit tamely and admit the produce of other colonies free while they put heavy import duties on every article of produce that we could send them, or that duties should be imposed upon their productions. He maintained that intercolonial free-trade was what was required for Australasia. What was wanted was one uniform tariff for Australasia, and he hoped the day was not far distant when such a tariff would exist. He was quite satisfied that New Zealand could hold its own. Australia could not send very much wheat into this colony; they could not crush the New Zealand farmer by wheat grown in Australia; but, at the same time, it was exceedingly vexatious to find that a few years ago we were exporting horses from New Zealand to Victoria, and immediately an import duty was placed on horses there, so that the parties who were shipping them to Melbourne had to pay a high duty, and that now the conditions were reversed and horses were being introduced into New Zealand from Victoria. Was it not fair that we should deal to them the same treatment that they had dealt to us?

An Hon. MEMBER.—No.

Mr. MACKINTOSH.—Well, that was the question. He thought the time had come when the matter should be looked into. As to a return to the corn-laws, was there ever such an absurdity! Why, if they put 10s. a bushel on wheat brought to New Zealand, would that make any difference to the farmers of Canterbury, who were sending thousands of tons of wheat every year to the Mother-country, and everywhere else where there was a market for it? Would £1 a bushel on wheat be a return to the corn-laws here? Would that injure us? Would the loaf be one bit the dearer for it while we exported as immensely as we did? The fact was, the effect would be little or nothing. As to the proposed duty on coal, if everything was as it should be—if we had intercolonial free-trade—then it would be absurd; but under present circumstances it was a matter to be debated which was the best policy to adopt in order to bring about free-trade with

Australia. There never was anything more absurd than the varying tariffs between one colony and another. In Australasia, where there were the same rates of wages and the same hours of labour, why should one colony be protected against the other? The thing was an absurdity. Australasia required Protection against the older countries of Europe, where they had machinery of a superior order, with long hours of labour and miserable pay; we certainly did want Protection against the products and manufactures of Germans and Belgians; but as to Protection against one colony and another, we might as well have Protection between the North and the South Islands as Protection against Victoria and New South Wales. We were of the same race, having the same laws, speaking the same language, our advantages being alike; why, then, should we not have intercolonial free-trade? What was Australasia in comparison with the United States of America in area or in importance? And yet for the last twenty years or more there had been Free-trade within the United States. That enormous territory had Free-trade within itself, although it had Protection as against the outside world. What was wanted was intercolonial free-trade, with a stiff protective tariff against the outside world, particularly in regard to manufactures. As to grain, he thought we should be able to hold our own for many a day. The question for the House to consider was, what was the best policy to bring these colonies to their senses,—whether we should tamely submit, turning the other cheek to them and letting them smite it by the introduction free of various articles of which they might have an overplus, or whether we should retaliate.

Mr. TANNER said he had no wish to delay the House except for the time which might be necessary for the utterance of about a dozen sentences; but the matter was of too great importance to the particular part of the colony of which he represented a portion to be allowed to pass without a definite expression of opinion, notwithstanding the fact that it was an abstract motion under discussion, and not a Government proposal. He did not intend for a moment to discuss the price of bread, the spread of the Anglo-Saxon race, the composition of the American Congress, or the policy of the New South Wales Parliament. Neither did he consider this a fitting opportunity to argue the abstract question of Free-trade and Protection. There was a very simple question before the House. It was involved in the proposal of the amendment to impose a duty of 5s. per ton on coal imported into the colony of New Zealand.

An Hon. MEMBER.—No.

Mr. TANNER.—Well, that amount had been mentioned. He apologized to the honourable member for Buller for having said it was a fixed sum. It might be he had been misled by the fact that a member of the late Parliament did fix a sum—he forgot for the moment whether it was 5s. or 10s. per ton—in a motion of this kind which he moved in the House a couple of years ago. Possibly, it might not

have been necessary for him to speak at all but for the confident manner in which one gentleman—the honourable member for Marsden—had said there was “no fear of a rise in the price of coal,” and that if this duty were imposed “nothing of the kind need be apprehended.” That was said in such a tone of confidence that he was fairly astonished, and compelled to go back in his memory to some eight or ten years ago, when a Government which was led by the present senior member for Wellington City and Sir Julius Vogel brought down an intended tariff to the House in which it was proposed to levy a duty on coal of—he forgot whether it was 2s. or 5s. per ton.

An Hon. MEMBER.—Half a crown.

Mr. TANNER.—Well, the moment that statement was published in Christchurch there was an instant rise of 5s. per ton all over the city, and all through the surrounding neighbourhood; there was no question of waiting till

9.30. the duty was imposed. There could be no plea of an increased price when purchasing to replenish stocks. It was put on within less than twenty-four hours after the statement was made in that House. He thought one single fact of that kind was worth a dozen statements, no matter with what confidence they might be made. Then, the honourable member for Auckland City (Mr. Crowther) told them there was “no necessity for the importation of coal into the colony at all,” in which he thoroughly agreed with the honourable gentleman. He would state his reasons for agreement, and the remedy he proposed, before he sat down. For the moment he looked at the various parts of the colony to see how they would be affected by this proposed duty. The Province of Hawke's Bay must be entirely dependent on seaborne coal. It was impossible coal could be brought there from any part of this colony except by steamer. Canterbury was in a similar position; and so was Wellington, as far as the immediate neighbourhood surrounding the city, and the city itself, were concerned. The northern part of the Province of Wellington was tolerably well supplied with fuel from the bush; but the rest of Wellington Province was similarly situated to Christchurch. Otago was more or less independent of outside supplies. The position in Christchurch was that there was no railway communication with the coal-producing country on the West Coast; and the enormous railway-rates levied on the transport of minerals entirely prevented any coal being brought from the Province of Otago, where there was a local supply. It was true that coal existed and was worked in Canterbury, but the supply was so small and of such an inferior nature that it could not be reckoned on as a factor in competing. Christchurch and the immediate district were entirely dependent on what coal could be brought in by the port of Lyttelton, and that, he believed, was brought in entirely by one company, whether it came from Australia or the West Coast. Talk of competition within the colony keeping down the price to a reasonable limit! under such conditions as

Mr. Tanner

these, competition did not exist in that province. The whole or the bulk of the people there were at the mercy of a single ring or trust. He was assured from dealers themselves that it was impossible to obtain coal except from one firm which received all consignments, and which held the entire body of the people at its mercy. Coal was retailed at 35s. and 36s. in Christchurch, which at Westport was put on board for 10s. or 11s. per ton—a rise of some 300 per cent.—and he wished to know whether between 10s. or 11s. and 35s. and 36s. there was not a sufficient margin for the development of the mines where good coal could be produced. The subject was too great and this question had been sprung upon them too suddenly to allow one to speak on the subject or to deal with it so exhaustively as one might have done; but in opposing the motion he could assure the House that he had not been sent there to increase the price to the industrial workers of Canterbury of a prime necessity of life. It appeared to him that what they lacked in the colony was not the material—they could produce enough of most articles—but what they urgently required were facilities for getting their products more readily to the consumers after they were marketable, whether fruit or coal. The remedy appeared to him to be that, if the Government would go more earnestly into the matter, and acquire coal-mines and vessels to act as distributors, the whole difficulty might be overcome without entering on a tariff war with the other colonies. As for the suggestion thrown out that the proposal was a necessary act of retaliation to bring Australia to its senses, he considered that active hostility as a means of promoting general fraternity was too absurd to be seriously discussed.

Mr. HOGG said the last speaker, in his concluding remarks, had referred, he thought, to a very good remedy, and that was that, instead of allowing the consumers of coal in this colony, and particularly in Wellington, to be at the mercy of a coal ring—he did not know the nature of this ring, but he saw there was one; he did not know whether it was the coal-producers and the shipping combinations together, or whether it was a separate ring—but he thought that, instead of allowing the consumers, and especially the manufacturers, to be at the mercy of a coal ring, it would be much better if the Government itself undertook the management of this industry. At any rate, he should like to see a beginning made with regard to the nationalisation of our coal-mines, and he did not know a better way in which it could be done than by the Government taking possession of one of those mines on the West Coast and working it on the co-operative system for the purpose of producing enough fuel for their railway system. That would be a very good beginning. Then, after a time, there was no reason why they should not establish dépôts in the different centres to supply the population at a fair and moderate price. It was a notorious fact that for years past the price of coal in Wellington had been simply a famine price;

and these prices had been maintained up to the present time. He could confirm what had been stated by the honourable member for Patea that evening, that quite recently—within the last few days—a co-operative association of workers in the city had had their coal practically stopped because, when they were buying in wholesale quantities, the party who sold was informed that if he did not raise his prices the ring would cease to supply him. That was not a condition of affairs they ought to find in a free country like this. He was very glad, for one reason, this discussion had arisen, because he thought it was a most important debate. They knew very well that in this colony they were on the verge of a huge industrial crisis—of a crisis of the greatest moment: they stood on the verge of a crisis of a most momentous character. They had to deal, not with the unemployed adults of the country, but with the young unemployed who were springing up in their population. In all their cities, as well as in the country districts, they found a large number of youths leaving school and looking for employment, and unable to find it; and that was one reason why they found so much depression, why they found so much privation amongst families, so much poverty, and also why their merchants and their storekeepers and their tradesmen were complaining so bitterly about the present state of affairs. He maintained that coal was only one item in a very long and very important programme. If they looked through the list of our imports, what did they find? They found, in their dealings with other colonies and countries that, whilst the export trade was frequently diminishing, the import trade was increasing. Let them compare their exports with their imports. Doubtless, Great Britain was one of their very best customers. She took from us in the shape of exports over seven million pounds' worth of raw products; but we, on the other hand, imported from Great Britain no less than four and a half million pounds' worth of merchandise. Then, again, if one took America, she was a very good consumer with regard to our raw products. The amount of our exports to America was about half a million, and our imports from America came to £380,000. But when they left these two countries what did they find? They found that the value of their exports to India was only £12,550, and the value of their imports from India exceeded £300,000. Then, again, if they took China, the value of their exports to China was £3,400 in 1893, and the value of their imports from China was £29,600, or nearly £30,000—just about ten times the value of their exports. Then, coming a little nearer, they found that Australia took from this colony exports to the value of £1,274,000 in that year. They in return imported from Australia goods to the value of £1,400,000, leaving a balance against New Zealand as regards Australia of £130,000. Now, how had this money disappeared? How had they spent it? He found that in wearing-apparel and slops, notwithstanding they had an import duty of 25 per cent., £346,000 was ex-

pended that year. In boots and shoes, notwithstanding that there was a 20-per-cent. import duty on those articles, and that they had all the raw material here for their manufacture—they had their tanneries and tradesmen to produce them—in spite of that the value imported into the colony was £142,000. And then, when they came to this matter of coal from New South Wales, they imported no less than a hundred and twelve thousand pounds' worth—money that might very well have been kept in the colony, assisting the coal-miners and developing a valuable industry. Then, again, they came to another article—tobacco and cigars: £125,000 was spent in that, although the manufacture might very well be carried on in New Zealand, instead of being confined to other places. They would be somewhat surprised when he told them that only about half of this money had gone to America. The other half, or about £60,000, had chiefly gone to Great Britain, New South Wales, and Victoria; and they would be further astonished to learn that no less than twelve thousand pounds' worth of manufactured tobacco was obtained from those colonies, and that one-half the cigars labelled Havannah, Cuba, and different places in South America actually came from New South Wales, and were manufactured in the City of Sydney. That was a fact which was amply borne out. Then, in timber, palings, *et cetera*, he found that in 1893 £16,000 was spent on logs, £5,000 on palings and posts, and £16,000 on sawn timber, the most of which was obtained from New South Wales and Tasmania. Then, the same remarks would apply to the matter of saddlery. They could very easily manufacture the whole of their saddlery in New Zealand. Nearly £23,000 went out of the colony for saddlery. Then, again, the materials for saddlery and harness came to £26,500. He found the same state of things prevailing with regard to the iron trade. They were large importers of agricultural machinery from England and America; it amounted to over £65,000 per annum: implements, over £5,000; steam-engines, boilers, *et cetera*, over £100,000. For manufactured iron, wire, and other stuff that could be manufactured in New Zealand they spent no less than £300,000, and for nails, which could be easily manufactured in the colony, no less than £25,000; hardware and ironmongery, £166,000; axes and spades, £18,000. And so he could go right down the list. Even malt was imported, although this was a splendid colony for producing that. Over in Nelson they grew excellent barley. Then, there were hops, on which there was a pretty heavy duty of 6d. per pound; yet, with every advantage for producing them, he found that £3,600 was sent out of the colony for hops. Then, again, in spite of the import duty of 2d. per pound, they spent £1,200 for bottled fruit. Then, there were such things as raisins, pickles, preserved milk; and £10,000 for mustard, which might be grown in New Zealand.

Mr. SPEAKER.—The honourable gentleman is now travelling a long way from the subject of imposing a duty on coal.

Mr. HOGG said the list was a very long one. What he wanted to impress on the House was that they must find employment for the young New-Zealanders, not merely for the coal-miners, but for the boys and girls who were growing up. It was something shocking; in a place like Wellington manufacturers had told him that, while they had only two or three openings a year for apprentices, there were as many as three or four hundred names on their list of applications. Such a condition of things should not exist in a country like this. They had a numerous young population who required employment. It was all very well to talk about technical instruction. Where was proper technical instruction to be given? It was to be found in the factories; and, he said, our manufactures must be assisted, and the only proper way to assist them was to get rid of the revenue tariff as speedily as they could, and in place of it introduce a tariff that would protect the workers. That was the tariff this colony wanted, call it by any name they might. They talked about a Free-trade tariff—there was no such thing to be found in any part of the world. It was all nonsense to refer to Free-trade and Protection; where did they find Free-trade? He would like those honourable members who talked so glibly about Free-trade to point out one single country where Free-trade existed. There was no such thing known. A great deal was said about retaliation. He did not advocate retaliation for a moment, but they must stand on the defensive. If they were assailed by rivals they must defend themselves; if they were assailed by the tariffs of other countries which refused to take the raw materials or manufactures of this colony without imposing duties upon them; if we found they were protecting the manufactures and coal-measures in the adjoining colonies, why should not the producers of this colony be protected? It was all very well to say the material was here, and to point to our good climate and say we were able to protect ourselves. That did not affect the question for a moment. We had to look at our own population, and to see that the requirements of the labour-market were attended to—that our machinery was not allowed to rust: and the best machinery we had was our young population. It was scandalous that the Civil Service should be besieged in the way it was day after day by applications for employment when there was no room. The Civil Service was being run after by our young population, because they could find no other outlet for their labour. They had well-educated boys and girls clamouring for employment, trying to get into the telegraph-office, the telephone-office, and various departments of State. One saw them passing the Civil Service examination, and going to high schools and colleges with the view of getting into the Civil Service; and what was going to happen in regard to the Service if this sort of pressure was continued? The only way to get rid of this pressure, to get rid of this great evil that was growing from day to day and becoming more menacing, was to revise

the tariff as soon as possible. The Government had been trifling with the matter long enough. They had had several years of office, and the country was looking for an improvement in the state of affairs. It was all very well to put people on the land. The Minister of Lands, through the agency of one of the most Liberal Land Acts that existed in a young country, was certainly doing his best in that direction; but the land would not absorb the whole population, and the town and the country must work in harmony. They must assist their trades. There were plenty of enterprising men and there was plenty of capital in the country. They had skilled manufacturers, and he had been told by some of them that if the Government would give them sufficient encouragement, by slightly raising the duties, then they would be able to fight the foreign manufacturer. But our tariff was oppressing the labouring-classes, because it made the necessaries of life in many instances very dear. He did not believe in keeping up the price of the necessaries of life. They must be reduced as much as possible. If they wanted working-men to be able to work for moderate wages they must regulate the prices of the commodities of life by refusing to put duties unnecessarily on articles of daily consumption. On the other hand, they must protect their manufacturers, and do what they could to prevent the colony from being flooded with goods from other places. Taking a bird's-eye view of Wellington, there were some very wealthy importers and merchants who were doing well, and putting up palatial stores. The best buildings in Wellington were those erected by importers and merchants, but, if you asked the merchants about the condition of trade, you would hear them cursing the Government from day to day, and saying that everything was going to the bad, repeating the language of the senior member for Wellington City when he said that the country was going to ruin. And no doubt there would be ruin, unless the Government took this matter up in earnest, and dealt with the tariff in the way they should. What had made America the proud country she was? It was the manner in which her industries had been strengthened. What made Australia the country it was? No doubt there was a great deal of distress in that country, but there would always be waves of depression. But what had built up the manufactures of Victoria and New South Wales? It was the protective duties instituted by former Governments. It was all very well to say that things were going to the bad in those colonies.

Mr. SEDDON.—They have already gone.

Mr. HOGG.—There was no doubt about that; but it was of no use attributing it to the protective duties. They had nothing to do with it. The protective duties had had the effect of keeping the population employed, while otherwise they would have left the colony. Here, in New Zealand, no matter what might be said, it was the duty of the Government to come to the rescue of the manufacturer, and to assist in the development not only of the land, but of our manufacturing industries. If

they were going to keep the population well employed, to assist the labour-market, and put things on a prosperous basis, they must devote more attention than they had done for many years to the interests of the manufacturer and the artisan. They should endeavour to build up their industries. There was a splendid field for it. This was a grand colony. The soil was good, and the climate was excellent. There was simply wanting the hand of man and the energy of youth. The population was energetic. A young population was growing up here of which the country might be proud, and it would be a great reproach on the Assembly if it hesitated to assist that young population in finding employment; and the only way to find that employment was by protecting the manufacturer, and studying the interests of the city as well as those of the country. He trusted the question of the tariff would not be put off from year to year, but that the Government would deal with the question as speedily as possible. A more important question had not come before Parliament, and it was a question that admitted of no delay. If they were going to utilise the intelligent machinery they had around them, the sooner the tariff was dealt with the better. He trusted the House would give an indication that would induce the Government not to hesitate about what it should do, but to put its hands to the plough and deal with the whole question. It was a great and important question. He quite agreed with the Premier that it was not a question that should be constantly tinkered with; but now that they had a new and enlightened Parliament—constructed by a people only recently, as it were, enfranchised, and one that had done a wonderful amount of good work already in other directions—the question of the tariff should not be laid aside, but be dealt with as speedily as possible.

Mr. EARNSHAW would like, if he was in order, to move "the previous question."

Mr. SPEAKER said that could not be moved when an amendment was before the House.

Mr. EARNSHAW regretted that, because they had had a most striking statement from two leading members of the Ministry that night. He was not aware whether they had acted in concert with the mover of the amendment. It was very significant, however, that the Premier, referring to coal, and the Colonial Treasurer, to wheat, stated, if they had the opportunity of voting on this issue at another time than on going into Committee of Supply, they would vote for it.

Mr. SEDDON.—If the Australian Colonies continued their present policy.

Mr. EARNSHAW said these veiled words would not go down with him. The Premier distinctly led the House to realise that if this were a clear issue of putting a tariff on or not he would vote with the mover of the amendment.

Mr. SEDDON.—Unless the policy of Australia altered.

Mr. EARNSHAW said, if the honourable gentleman wished to make a speech afterwards, he had no objection. At present he wished to state that if he had at any time had any qualms of doubt as to the attitude he had taken lately towards the Government the statement that came from those benches that night would remove that doubt, and he felt sure that when the country woke up to the position those honourable gentlemen had taken it would most likely come to a different decision from that it came to at the last election. This certainly had been a session of surprises. They were returned as a non-borrowing Government, and they came to the House to find proposals for borrowing that, he thought, had staggered the country that had returned those honourable gentlemen.

Mr. MONTGOMERY asked if this had anything to do with the coal question.

Mr. SPEAKER was waiting to see how it would be connected; and, if such connection were not soon shown, he would have to interpose.

Mr. EARNSHAW was going to show the connection. Now, they had these proposals put before the House, emanating from two leaders of the party, which had not been before the country, which the party was not returned on, and which he said the best policies of the Liberal party were entirely opposed to. He thought the Liberal party held that such men as Cobden and Bright were the pillars upon which the party rested in its modern aspect of Liberalism. One of its main points was that the food-supplies should be free to the working people of the country. He thought that was the doctrine of Liberalism where he was brought up, in Manchester. Possibly that was not a Liberal city to be brought up in. He understood that was the gospel of Gladstone, who led the Liberal party, and it had been preached in this country by the Liberal party when it occupied the Opposition benches—that the food-supplies should be free. And here they had a Liberal Ministry putting forward proposals that no Conservative party in this colony or in the Old Country would ever have proposed except for war purposes. He should

10.0. vote against the Government. The point had been raised that the shippers of timber made return trips with coal cargoes, and that was one reason why we should put a tariff upon coal. What effect would that have upon the timber-export trade? Even if the timber boats had an export trade in timber to the other side they could get no cargoes in return, because of the prohibitive coal tariff here. And what did that mean? They would have to come back in ballast, and therefore, unless they could realise far higher values for the timber in Melbourne, Sydney, and South Australia, the timber industry would necessarily languish. The honourable member for Marsden and the honourable member for Auckland City (Mr. Crowther) had argued on the same line with regard to the sale of coal in Auckland. They enjoyed a position that was unique compared with the other

centres in New Zealand, in that, because of the imported coal, they got their coal at lower rates than any other centre which was dominated by the coal ring of New Zealand. The arguments the honourable member for Auckland City (Mr. Crowther) put forward with regard to the development of coal-mines in that district showed that the prices charged in that district were against all reason. The Premier had also given a very significant key-note—namely, that, if they put on this tariff, prices would rise. The Premier's argument was that the Mokihinui Company was almost in liquidation, that the Cardiff Company could not get an outlet, and that the Westport Company was not paying interest upon its capital invested. What did that mean? It meant that nobody should compete—that is, successfully compete—with these companies; and, to pay this interest, the price would have to necessarily rise. That was inevitable, and he contended his logic was fairly put. Regarding the statement of the Premier that the Dibbs Government had been ejected, and that New Zealand should stay its hand—

Mr. SEDDON.—Hear, hear.

Mr. EARNSHAW asked, What was the Dibbs Government rejected on? The one question at the late elections had been the question of Free-trade *versus* Protection, and half the labour members went down on that issue. The great bulk of the labour members went down on that issue. They were those who were in favour of high Protection, and some of them represented country interests. Therefore the party that had always been the advocates of Free-trade in New South Wales had now got into power. He thought it was the last argument they should take—namely, to talk about retaliatory measures. He would rather see the Government take up the position of waiting to see the result of that change.

Mr. SEDDON.—That is what I advise.

Mr. EARNSHAW said No; the Government were flying kites, and he liked men who voted and said exactly what they meant; but they could not expect that from the Government benches. The Premier, of course, came from the West Coast, and he naturally represented the coal interest. Then they had the Colonial Treasurer, who came from the wheat-growing district in New Zealand, and that raised the question with regard to grain. He (Mr. Earnshaw) should not have spoken upon this question at all, as he himself was upon the Tariff Committee, but he felt bound to speak upon the question, because they could not indicate at all in the House what was the work of that Committee. The paragraphs that appeared in the Press, coupled with the remarks they had heard that evening, were very significant of the intentions of the Government on this question; and if they wanted to know what was transpiring in Committee they had only to couple the inspired paragraphs in the newspapers with the statements from the Government benches to show that they clearly foreshadowed a tremendous impost on imported grain. There

was another point he would like to refer to. They had been told by the Colonial Treasurer that this was to relieve the farmers of New Zealand; but he did not believe one farmer in twenty had anything to do, at the present time, with the grain of last year. It had all, practically, passed from his hands and into the hands of the middleman and speculator. His opinion was that there was a corner in grain being held in New Zealand, and, on account of the importation of grain from South Australia, that corner had got frightened, and this movement was being made in the interests of that corner, and not in the interests of the working-man of New Zealand. The experience of all countries with regard to tariffs had been—in the Old Country particularly, which was a Free-trade country; also in the United States, which was a Protective country—that where there had been duties placed on the necessities of life there was a corresponding increase to the consumer. That was inevitable. What had given rise to the huge trusts in the States that had been able to control American markets? The importation of grain had been practically prohibited, and they had been able to corner the prices as they chose; and the people who had to pay were the working-classes, the consumers. The honourable member for Wellington City (Mr. Bell) said he had heard with deep regret the proposals from the Government benches. To some extent that honourable gentleman might be looked on as a representative of the Conservative class in New Zealand, and he (Mr. Earnshaw) looked upon these proposals with the same regret, representing as he did a section of the working-men, and belonging to the extreme section of the Liberal party. The proposals foreshadowed by the Government, and which they meant to enforce sooner or later—members should make no mistake about that—were intended to capture the country vote. The Government meant to put a high tariff on, to suit both town and country—to play off one against the other. He had been returned to the House pledged to reduce the necessities of life wherever he could, and while he was going to vote in that direction he should always vote to assist those industries he believed to be legitimate industries in New Zealand. He meant, by that, industries that employed skilled labour—not small tin-pot industries that only employed boys and girls, who as soon as they grew up to fifteen and twenty years of age were replaced by other boy-labour. Those industries were only a curse to New Zealand. He would always endeavour to support and protect those industries which most required help until they could feel their feet, with regard to the laying-down of the plant that was being used in the Old Country, and which had caused the enormous production there. Unless they were prepared to support these industries they would not be able to stand against the keen competition of the Old Country. He regretted exceedingly that he could not move "the previous question," as it appeared to him that the Government would go into the "Noes" lobby when they ought to go into the "Ayes"

Mr. Earnshaw

lobby, after the statements of the Premier and the Colonial Treasurer that evening.

Mr. SEDDON.—We shall go into the "Ayes" lobby.

Mr. EARNSHAW said the Government might, perhaps, but they would put up their supporters to go into the "Noes" lobby against them. It all depended, as the honourable member for Christchurch City had said, upon the way the question was put. They were anxious to get into Supply, and would oppose the honourable gentleman who had moved the motion, and at the same time they were flying kites in that House. Their action foreshadowed what the whole policy of the Government would be in that direction when it was enunciated. He took his stand upon that question, and he said straight out that he should oppose this Liberal Government to the hilt upon every point where they tried to raise the tariff on the necessities of life, or upon coal, as he believed it was detrimental to the interests of the wage-earners of New Zealand.

Mr. MASLIN would not have risen to speak upon the question but for the remark of the Colonial Treasurer when he urged the mover of the amendment not to press for a division. He considered the question of such importance that it certainly ought to go to a division, because, after the expression of opinion given by Ministers to-night, he would not be surprised if the coal-merchants did not raise the price of coal at least 5s. on Saturday morning. Therefore it was only right they should satisfy them that on this question the House had no intention whatever of imposing so iniquitous an impost upon an article that was the foundation of all our local industries. It was all very well to talk about protecting and encouraging local industries, but it was now proposed to place a heavy duty upon an article that was really the foundation of all local industries, which gave employment to a large number of hands. He noticed in the Budget proposals of the Colonial Treasurer that it was proposed to give an export bonus of 2s. a ton on the first 50,000 tons of coal exported from New Zealand outside the Australian Colonies. It struck him as being a very strange thing to propose to give an export bonus for the coal exported from this colony, and at the same time to propose a duty of 5s. a ton on coal imported into the colony. If they were in the position to export coal, surely they could enter into competition in New Zealand with a country that was thirteen hundred miles away. He thought their coal was already sufficiently protected. Considering the distance that coal had to be carried by our steamers and sailing-vessels, if our local mines could not compete successfully with Newcastle there must be something radically wrong in the management and working of those mines, and the sooner this management was altered the better it would be for the mines and for the country generally. He would certainly vote against the imposition of duty, and if no one else called for a division he would call for one, so that a clear expression of opinion could be had from honour-

able members on a question of such vital importance to all the parties concerned. He was certain if this duty were imposed the price of coal would not only be increased to the consumer by the amount of 5s. per ton, but there would be the extra profit to the importer to be added, and it would mean that the consumer would actually have to pay about 6s. a ton more for his coal than he did at present. He could not tell how it was that coal should be so dear in Wellington. He knew that in other places where coal was carried long distances it was sold at a much lower rate than it was in Wellington. The only way that he could account for it was that to deliver coal in Wellington they had to carry it on their backs, going up scaling-ladders, so to speak, to the residences of the people. The extra cost must be due to the expense entailed upon the merchants in delivering to the customer. He did not suppose that if any one went down to the wharf and purchased coal by the truck it would cost more than from 18s. to £1 a ton; but there was a considerable expense involved in delivering the coal in Wellington—much greater than was the case in any other towns in the colony, where it could be delivered in a cart, and had not to be carried to a considerable distance, as was the case in Wellington, on the backs of the men employed by the merchants. The question had been raised that evening of imposing an import duty on wheat. Well, so far as he had been able to ascertain the feeling of farmers on this question, he did not think they were in favour of protective duties at all. If they were opposed to one thing more than another it was to these protective duties, which, sooner or later, fell upon themselves. He himself had the honour to represent a large farming district, where a considerable quantity of wheat was grown, and he had had no request from any person in that district to support any proposition of the kind. He felt certain, from the interest the farmers took in general politics, that if this question were of vital interest to them he would have had some communication from them, because he had communications almost every day from his district on questions affecting the interests of the people there. Therefore he was convinced there was no desire on the part of the farmers for the imposition of this duty on grain. He believed the spring that had set this question in motion was the companies and merchants, who now held pretty well all the grain that was in the colony. Very little grain was now held by the farmers, because the harvest was a bad one, and they were all more or less in need of money, and although prices were low they had to dispose of their grain in order to get the necessary funds to carry on with. So those who were asking for the duty were those who held large stocks of wheat which they had purchased at low prices, and it was in order to enrich themselves by means of a grain duty that these men were anxious to have one imposed. He thought a more iniquitous thing for the House to listen to than this proposal to impose

a duty upon such a staple article of food as wheat could hardly be imagined. He felt certain that if it were imposed it would very soon be felt by the bulk of the consumers in the increase of $\frac{1}{2}$ d. or 1d. in their loaf. Therefore he hoped the House would seriously consider this question in all its bearings, and that a majority would be found to vote against the amendment of the honourable member for the Buller to impose this duty on coal; and whenever the question of imposing duties on grain came before the House he hoped a considerable majority would vote against it.

Mr. REEVES had not heard the whole of the speech delivered by the honourable member for Dunedin City (Mr. Earnshaw), and therefore it was possible that that honourable gentleman did refer to the question before the House. But he thought he heard most of his speech, and during that time he certainly said nothing whatever about the duty on coal. The speech was almost entirely taken up with those reflections upon the Government which they heard daily and nightly from the honourable gentleman, and which Ministers were prepared to continue to hear with equanimity. He referred to that honourable gentleman's speech because of one expression which he let fall, and which, as it seemed to him, he had let fall unintentionally. He said that he had been returned pledged to a reduction of the necessaries of life. The honourable gentleman did not mean to say that, but he said it. And that was what exactly proved the necessity for this duty. If they were prepared to see the working-men of this colony go without work they certainly would not deceive them by saying they were helping them by opposing any duty on the necessaries of life. Let them remember this: It was a capital thing to make the necessaries of life as cheap as they could, but, if a man had not the wherewithal to buy them, he thought that man would prefer to have them a little more expensive in order to have work at 6s. or 8s. a day to enable him to buy a certain amount of them. That was the question they were brought face to face with. The honourable member for Avon gave his opinion on the subject clearly, as he usually did. But he was surprised that the honourable gentleman gave it very clearly against a protective duty on coal. Let him (Mr. Reeves) just point out to the honourable gentleman that in his opinion, if each Protectionist in the colony was to take that line with regard to possible protective duties on all industries except those particular ones which he wanted to have protected, he would have to whistle for Protection for his own particular industry for many a long day. His honourable friend was very strong in his advocacy of a protective duty on boots and shoes, and yet every argument he used against a protective duty on coal could be made use of with equal force against protecting boots and shoes. Take, for example, the case of the coal-miners of Westport: how were they protected if a duty were placed upon the importation of boots and shoes? They had no industry of that kind there, and they might

Mr. Maslin

ask, why should they have to pay extra on their boots and shoes for the benefit of the honourable gentleman? Therefore, if his honourable friend was not prepared to stand by any other industry than that with which he happened to be identified, what was fair for others would be fair for him, and on that principle he might have to wait many a generation for the protection of those industries that either he or his constituents wanted to have protected. It had been said by speaker after speaker that they did not mean to be drawn into a discussion upon the general question of Protection and Free-trade at present. In fact, they deprecated that. Well, he himself certainly deprecated elaborate disquisitions on the abstract theories of Protection and Free-trade. But to say that it was not right to make passing reference to the question of Free-trade and Protection, and its principles, was to deny they had a right to discuss the motion from the highest standpoint, because it was obvious—according to his view—that the principles of Free-trade and Protection were involved in the motion before the House. If they believed that the principles of Free-trade were radically true, and of universal application, and as true as that two and two made four, then they could not possibly support this motion. It was a matter of principle and expediency. Therefore he did not altogether see that they must not import the question of Protection and Free-trade into the debate. He thought they should. It seemed to him that his genial and enthusiastic friend the honourable member for Inangahua, in the very nice speech he gave, not only strayed into the region of Protection and Free-trade, but that he overstepped the ground, and wandered through the visionary ground of abstractions, into which, certainly, he would not follow him. But his honourable friend did give them one or two illustrations which he had in his memory. He referred to the question of retaliation and intercolonial reciprocity, and he gave them the illustration of the position of two imaginary farmers. One of them, he said, grew superior potatoes, and the other a superior quality of seed-wheat. Farmer A, the potato-man, wanted to sell his potatoes to the seed-man, but the seed-man would not buy. Therefore, said his honourable friend the member for Inangahua, "It is ridiculous for Farmer A to say that because he could not sell his potatoes to Farmer B he should refuse to buy B's seed-wheat," and so cut his own throat. Now, that was not the position. The coal sent from New South Wales was not a superior coal to that produced in New Zealand; and the position was this: The New-South-Welshmen asked us to buy an inferior coal in order to shut out our own superior coal. That was the position. He said it was not a fair position, and that experience had shown that it was an intolerable position, and it would be a foolish and unbusinesslike thing to endure it. This question of putting a duty on New South Wales coal was not a new question in the House. Though he was not an old member, he remembered its being debated in the House seven years ago.

The argument was then used that we should not impose a duty on New South Wales coal, simply because we had their markets open for our dairy produce, and it was said, "If you put a duty on New South Wales coal they will shut our dairy produce out." In addition to that, it was then urged that the ships trading between New South Wales and New Zealand, to carry our dairy produce there, found it a great convenience and saving of expense to be able to return with a back-freight of coal in order to take further cargoes of dairy produce over there. It was said that it was a matter of fair-play that, if we were to have their ports kept open to our dairy produce, we should allow their coal to come in duty-free. But that did not last. We had continued, in season and out of season, to take their coal, but they had calmly prohibited our dairy produce, and kept their home markets for themselves. Therefore the question was now to be argued from an entirely different standpoint, and we had to say whether retaliation might not be, in the present instance, the essence of justice,—whether it might not be also the essence of business. Now, the honourable member for Wellington City, for example, said that retaliation was worse even than abstract Protection, because it imported into the question the element of hostility as between nations. Very well; supposing a nation made war against this country, were they not to defend themselves from attack? If they were to defend themselves against attack when a man hit them, were they to be condemned because they imported an element of hostility into the question?

Mr. JOYCE.—That is a different case altogether.

Mr. REEVES.—No, it was not. An industrial war was like a military war, and was governed by the same principles. If a man hit them, or invaded the country with an army, were they not to hit him back? Was it to be supposed they were to remain mild and submissive, and adopt an angelic and submissive attitude? Not a bit of it. An invader, if he saw that those he assailed were prepared to invade his territory in turn, and especially if he thought they would be probably successful in that enterprise, would be all the more likely to make peace and come to an agreement with them. But if he found that he could bully them, and they sat down under it like angels, depend upon it he would go on bullying them, especially if he were made of the same stuff as the statesmen of New South Wales. What did one of the statesmen of New South Wales say the other day? An emissary from New

10.30. Zealand asked him if there was any possibility of getting their ports open to New Zealand traffic. He said, "If I had my way I would block everything that comes to New South Wales from New Zealand." Those were the sort of people they had to deal with—not angels, not Quakers, and not perfect people, but men of business, who looked at the matter from their own standpoint and their own interests. They did not care about our interests; they thought only about their own.

The only way to argue with such gentlemen was to retaliate by carrying the war into their territory. However, there were other points from which this question had been approached. They had been told that if they put a duty on coal they must necessarily raise the prices to the consumer, and that all duties put upon articles of consumption had always raised the price to the consumer. The honourable member for Patea particularly quoted an example to show that a duty had invariably raised the price to the consumer. Unfortunately for that honourable gentleman, an ounce of practice was worth a ton of theory. They had had a duty put upon wheat in New Zealand. He remembered the circumstance very well, because a gentleman with whom he was very closely connected got the duty put on. He was not at all surprised that his honourable friend the member for Ashburton objected to the wheat duty now, because he had objected to it on other occasions just as strongly. The gentleman he referred to represented the farming interests, and he was returned in the teeth of the opposition of the honourable member for Ashburton. Then the cry was raised, "If you put 9d. a hundred on grain it must raise the price of living to the poor man." It was conclusively shown that, even if the price of bread were raised mathematically in proportion to the price of wheat, the result would be the raising of something less than 1d. on the 4lb. loaf. Practically the price of bread at that time did not rise at all, for the simple reason that they were able to keep the bakers well supplied with New Zealand grain, and the only change was that the bread was made of New Zealand flour instead of Adelaide flour. And he ventured to say, if a duty were put upon wheat now, they had such ample supplies of excellent wheat in New Zealand that the price would not rise one fraction. The question was simply whether the miller and the baker would use the local article or whether they would use the imported article. If it were true that they could not raise the price of wheat even a trifle by Protection without raising the price of bread, then it ought to be true as mathematically that the price of wheat could not fall without reducing the price of bread. Had the price of bread fallen in ratio to the extraordinary fall in the price of wheat in the last three or four years? Nothing of the sort; and the price of bread therefore would not come up if the price of wheat were raised a penny or two a bushel. What would take place was that those shipments of Victorian and Adelaide wheat would stop, and that the millers would buy New Zealand wheat, and the bakers would buy New Zealand flour. An honourable member had endeavoured to show that in the South Island the stocks of wheat were held by the middlemen, and that the result of stopping the Adelaide and Victorian wheat would be to raise the price in favour of the middle men. Well, he had received telegrams about those stocks of wheat. He had received a telegram from a man who

stated that about 400,000 bushels of wheat was held in Dunedin for the growers; and he had heard from one man in Christchurch that his firm held over 200,000 bushels of wheat for the growers, and not for the middlemen.

An Hon. MEMBER.—How many for themselves?

Mr. REEVES was speaking of the stocks that were being held for the growers. The honourable gentleman stated flatly that the stocks were being held for the middlemen, and if there was any rise in the price they would get it. If there was any rise in price the grower would get it. That was the result in 1871, and therefore he thought it was only fair to assume that it would be the result now, because they were not talking theory, they were talking from experience. They had had a duty put upon grain, and they had had exactly the same prophecies about raising the poor man's living and raising the price of the necessities of life. That was all said again and again *ad nauseam*, and it was all shown to be absolutely false by the issue. Now with regard to the price of coal. In a country like this, where Nature had provided an ample supply of material, sufficient for manufacturing purposes and of a first-class quality, were they not justified in saying that some protection should be afforded in this country against the tricks of the trade? There was no doubt that many of the mines would have to be closed if the introduction of the Newcastle coal went on increasing. Much had been said of the good results of Free-trade: it had been said the results were a cheap article, and the destruction of the rings and of syndicates. Now they were dealing with coal, which was an article admitted free into New Zealand. They saw all around them to-day the results of a policy of Free-trade in dealing with the coal. What were the results of that policy of Free-trade?—Rings and syndicates—the prices kept up in Wellington and Christchurch and elsewhere, and our own coal-mine companies being ruined, our own miners being thrown out of employment, some of them working half-time, and many being unable to get work at all. Instead of reciprocity, and instead of trade being promoted with other countries, their trade was being locked out of those other countries, after all the advantages they were promised from Free-trade. He asked, did they get those advantages from Free-trade? No, they did not get one; but they got all the evils that were prophesied of Protection—that was to say, trusts and syndicates which kept prices artificially high, and the locking-out of our articles from foreign ports. Free-trade had been tried, and the evils prophesied of Protection resulted from this Free-trade, together with other evils. Native production was checked; native workmen had not been able to find employment. They could not get anything worse from Protection for coal than they had at present from Free-trade. On the contrary, he was inclined to think they would get very much good from it.

Hon. MEMBERS.—Oh!

Mr. REEVES said some honourable mem-

Mr. Reeves

bers did not seem to like what he was saying. He repeated, having seen that the evil consequences which were predicted from a duty on wheat did not arise, and having seen that the free-trade in coal had produced all the evil consequences that were predicted of Protection, why should they be so afraid of a duty on wheat or a duty on coal? He was not dealing with theory, he was dealing with facts and with experience, and he would say this: that he saw no reason for supposing that the prices would be permanently raised by shutting out Newcastle coal. What would be the result? The result would be to stimulate production, and the production would, in consequence, be carried on more cheaply. And they had a political party in power who, if it was necessary to bring down rings and syndicates, were the men to do it. He said they should not allow rings and syndicates to reap huge profits from protective duties.

An Hon. MEMBER.—What about the coal-mines?

Mr. REEVES said the two things went hand-in-hand. He was prepared, as a member of the Government, to do anything that lay in his power to effect an improvement in the trade. The two things went hand-in-hand—the breaking-down of the ring prices and the shutting-out of the foreign article. It was ridiculous to say that you should do one without the other. He admitted that Protection in America had been to some extent a failure, inasmuch as no steps were taken to provide against enormous profits going into the hands of trusts, syndicates, and pools. But was there any comparison between the Protection in America and such Protection as they were prepared to put on that night? Why had the duty on wool in America been a failure? Because America could not grow enough wool to supply her manufacturers and the local markets. But in New Zealand we had more than enough coal to supply all our requirements. There was no comparison between the Protection they proposed and Protection run mad in America. And had America ceased to be a Protectionist country? Certainly not. Duties were retained in America, and would be retained for many years to come, which were infinitely higher than they were likely to impose in New Zealand. There was a difference between rational Protection and irrational Protection. A comparison between the duty on coal and the American duty on wool was quite as wide of the mark as a comparison with the old Protection in England which had been referred to by the honourable member for Wellington City (Mr. Bell). Why did Protection break down in England? Because it was a Protection on wheat and articles of food which could not be grown in England in sufficient quantity. And what did Protection lead to in England? It meant that the price of wheat went up to £5 a quarter. Compare that with what Protection had led to in New Zealand, where wheat was only £1 a quarter, or one-fifth what it once was in England. He admitted that Protection was a question of degree, and he admitted that Protection could be unreason-

able—it could run mad, and injure countries; but it was their business to draw a line between reasonable Protection and unreasonable Protection, and, while they saw that the consumer was not loaded with prices he could not pay, it was their duty to see that their industries were not crippled by the importation of foreign produce, especially when they could produce a better article in the colony. That was the reasonable Protection he stood up for as a New-Zealander, and, as far as he was concerned, he was not so selfish as to demand that only the industries of Christchurch—such as the boot and shoe industry—should receive Protection. The miners of Otago, Westland, and Auckland should also receive reasonable Protection and employment for themselves, to enable them to find bread for their wives and children.

Mr. MASSEY wished, in the first place, to refer very briefly to the speech of the honourable member for Ashburton. While he agreed in the main with the opinions expressed by that gentleman, he wished to correct one statement that he made. He stated that agricultural implements were exempt from duty. Such was not the case. He admitted that many agricultural implements were exempt. Ploughs, for instance, were free from duty, but plough-fittings had a very heavy duty imposed upon them. The same thing applied to reapers and binders. Reapers and binders were admitted free, but on certain of the fittings a very heavy duty was imposed. Then, in the matter of chaff-cutters, corn-crushers, and other things of that sort, duties of from 15 per cent. to 20 per cent. were charged, and many other things were subject to duty in the same way. Undoubtedly it was necessary that we should produce as cheaply as possible, since our productions had to come into competition with the cheap land and the cheap labour of other countries. It should therefore be their duty to see that these duties were abolished; and the honourable member, whenever the opportunity arose, would have all the assistance he (Mr. Massey) could give in that direction. He felt sure that it was of very much more importance to see that those duties were abolished than to impose a duty on wheat, which would only affect them, perhaps, in one season in twenty. The last speaker, the Minister of Education, had been very anxious to impress upon the House the fact that, because the imposition of a duty on cereals was not followed by a corresponding increase in the price of wheat, neither would the imposition of a duty on coal be followed by a rise in the price of that article. But when the duty was imposed upon wheat, and up till lately, they produced a great deal more of that article than they consumed, and exported vast quantities of it. The price they received for wheat was the price in the European markets, less freight and other charges. But, so far as coal was concerned, for some reason or another they were still importers of that article, and the price depended on the local demand and supply, and on the cost of production. Con-

sequently there was no analogy between the two cases, no parallel between the case of coal now and that of wheat ten years ago. The strangest argument he had heard that night had been that the imposition of a duty on coal would not affect the price of it. If such was the case—if this statement was correct—what was the object of the duty? He was of opinion that the honourable member for the Buller, who had moved the amendment, knew very well that the imposition of 5s. a ton on coal would mean a corresponding rise in the price of that article. He thought they would make a great mistake by imposing a prohibitive duty on coal, or even any duty however small. It has been a principle laid down by most eminent authorities on political economy that raw material should be admitted duty-free, because it was necessary that we should produce as cheaply as possible. Now, a duty on coal would be followed by a corresponding rise to the consumer, and by an increased cost in the production of those articles where steam-power was necessary. They had heard a great many complaints the other day, and at different times, about the price of coal in Wellington; but if they carried this amendment they would go in the direction of still further increasing the price of that article. It seemed to him that the coal most affected by the imposition of a duty would be the Newcastle coal. Unfortunately, most of the coal in this country was brown coal, or, at all events, a coal of a very light character, altogether unsuitable for blacksmiths' purposes or for the manufacture of gas. Coal for these purposes must come from Newcastle or from the west coast of the South Island, and he did not think there was the slightest doubt but that the imposition of a duty on coal would affect the price of coal from the district he had mentioned. They had heard a great deal that night about the immense quantities of coal in this country. They had heard about four hundred square miles of coal in the Province of Taranaki, and of vast deposits of coal on the West Coast. They had in the past been building great breakwaters, making artificial harbours, and expending hundreds of thousands of pounds in districts where coal was available; and yet, after all, the people interested in the coal trade came to them and told them that even now they were not able to compete with the imported article—they came and asked for protection from the coal of New South Wales. Well, he thought the line should be drawn somewhere. He thought the freight and other charges consequent on bringing coal from Newcastle should be sufficient protection, and that it would be contrary to the best interests of the colony to impose a duty on coal, and consequently he was opposed to the amendment.

Mr. MEREDITH had no desire to delay the House going into Committee on the estimates, but the debate had taken such a turn that it was necessary he should say something. He represented a portion of a most important part of the colony—the Provincial District of Canterbury, which was very largely interested in

this question. He regretted that the House had that night anticipated the report of the Select Committee set up for the purpose of revising and readjusting the tariff. It would have been better, he thought, that this debate should have been delayed until such time as that report was before the House, and then the whole question could have been gone into exhaustively, and dealt with on its merits. When that report came up he should be prepared to consider very carefully the recommendations of the Committee, and to do all he could as an individual member of the House to ease the burden of taxation off the mass of the people on the necessaries of life. The honourable member who had just sat down referred to some remarks made by the honourable member for Ashburton, who had said that agricultural machinery was admitted duty-free. He thought that the honourable member for Ashburton had been speaking correctly when he made that statement. He found by the statistics in the blue-book, page 113, under the heading "Agricultural Implements," all were put down as duty-free, and the value of agricultural implements imported last year was £4,958. In machinery, under the head "Agricultural Machinery" the amount was £65,573, also duty-free. He was not in a position to say whether the extra fittings for agricultural machinery were admitted duty-free or not; but, with regard to agricultural implements and machinery, they were admitted, according to the statement he had just read, duty-free. During the debate he had listened with considerable surprise to the remarks of the Premier, the Colonial Treasurer, and the Minister of Education. They had announced that night a Protective policy. He thought that a Protective policy would be most disastrous to the country, and he regretted exceedingly that those three honourable gentlemen, as the spokesmen of the Government of the colony, had expressed themselves in the direction of a Protective policy. The Minister of Education had particularly emphasized that policy, and in doing so referred in some uncomplimentary terms to the remarks made by the honourable member for Patea. He had told the House that "an ounce of practice was worth a ton of theory." Well, he would admit the correctness of that statement at once, but he thought there was no member in the House to whom those words would more apply than the Minister of Education. It would be a good thing for that honourable gentleman if he were a little more practical and a little less theoretical. The honourable gentleman had spoken about industrial warfare and commercial warfare—just the sort of statements to create a very unpopular sentiment in this country, and calculated to irritate the people in the neighbouring colonies. He ventured to say that if the sentiments expressed by the Minister of Education on this question were seriously entertained by the House the tenure of the present Ministry would not be worth six months' purchase. He was perfectly satisfied that the country

Mr. Meredith

would never commit itself to a Protective policy. It might be all very well for a few theorists in the towns—he was not referring to any honourable gentlemen who represented the towns; but all knew that there were theorists in the towns who had very little else to do than to discuss questions at street-corners and lamp-posts.

Mr. TANNER.—That is the pity of it; they have not something to do. A revision of the tariff would give them something to do.

Mr. MEREDITH said he questioned the correctness of the interjection of the member for Avon. Respecting a protective tariff, he thought they had a warning of its disastrous effects in the neighbouring Colony of Victoria, and in the United States of America; and he would ask honourable members who were interested in this question to look at the army of unemployed in each of those countries. In the *Review of Reviews* for July last they had a description of the march of tens of thousands of unemployed in the United States of America from California to Washington, the seat of Government, with a view to present their grievances there. That was the outcome in a country that had gone into Protection more than any other country in the world. The Government now in power in the Colony of New South Wales was in favour of throwing open its ports to our products, and we should not do anything that would irritate the people of New South Wales. New South Wales had formerly thrown open her ports for our products, until a Protective Government got possession of the benches there. They lost the confidence of the people; and now

11.30. there was a Government in New South Wales altogether in favour of Free-trade so far as the circumstances of the colony would permit. As to the quantity of coal imported into New Zealand from Australia, and the quantity exported from New Zealand, there had been various statements made that night by honourable members. In 1884 the value of the coal imported from Australia amounted to £194,756; in 1887 it had fallen to £108,788; in 1890 it had still fallen, to £102,116; and in 1893 it was £111,956: so that from 1884 to 1893 there had been a falling-off to the extent of 43 per cent., while the quantity of coal exported from New Zealand during the same time had very largely increased. In 1884 the total value of coal exported was £4,461, whilst in 1893 it amounted to £72,699.

Mr. MORRISON.—Nonsense!

Mr. MEREDITH said the honourable gentleman said "Nonsense!" but if he looked into the blue-books he would find the statement he had quoted perfectly correct. That left in favour of the neighbouring colony £39,257. He was of opinion that it would be a great mistake of the people of the colony to place an impost on coal imported into New Zealand. He had no doubt whatever in his mind that it would increase the price of coal. They spoke about the unemployed, and about the difficulty of finding employment. They dipped their hand deep into the Treasury on one hand to find

employment, and proposed to extract it out of the pockets of the people with the other hand in the shape of an impost on one of the necessities of life. If the Government wanted to help the poor people in the way of giving them cheap fuel they should have accepted the suggestion he made a few days ago to lower the tariff on their railways for the conveyance of millions of cords of firewood which were rotting in their bush at the present time, and which might be brought to the homes of these people very cheaply. It had been stated that night that many of the vessels which took timber from New Zealand to Australia brought back coal as ballast. That was quite true, but it was also true that vessels conveying produce from Canterbury, Otago, and Southland brought back coal as ballast. Now, if they were not in a position to convey back coal, what would follow? They would have to bring ballast, of no monetary value, and the exporter would have to pay an additional sum for freight on wheat, oats, and other produce. That would come out of the pockets of the producer, and would lessen the spending-power of the producer to employ labour. He quite agreed with the honourable member for Ashburton that the farmers did not ask for a protective duty on wheat. The quantity of wheat imported into New Zealand during the past year amounted to thirteen and a half bushels. What, therefore, was the use of placing an import duty on wheat? They could grow wheat as cheaply in New Zealand as in the neighbouring colonies; they could produce three times the quantity to the acre they could grow in South Australia, and, what with our machinery—quite as good as theirs—New Zealand farmers could produce wheat and send it into the market as cheaply as they could in South Australia, and therefore he did not think the New Zealand farmers need dread the farmers of the adjoining colonies sending wheat into New Zealand. If they advocated an import duty upon wheat they would thereby give an opportunity to those who were in favour of a Protective policy to call upon them to support their policy, or else to stultify themselves for any action they might take in recommending to the Government that a protective duty should be imposed on wheat. If the Government imposed 2s. 6d. or 5s. a bushel on wheat, what value would that be to the farmer in New Zealand? Of no possible value. They had had for a number of years a protective duty on grain, but for the past twenty or more years they had imported little or no wheat from the adjoining colonies. They had imported a little, it was true, but only for seed, so he could not see it would be any advantage whatever to the farming community to place an import duty on wheat. Those likely to get the benefit would be the merchants and middlemen. He knew very few farmers in his part of the country who had wheat in store. The fact was that wheat-growing had not been paying so well as to enable them to hold it. They had to thresh it out at once and put it into the market. The motion that an import duty on wheat would be an advantage to the farmers of New Zealand was

altogether incorrect, and he hoped no additional duty would be imposed.

Mr. G. W. RUSSELL said that throughout the discussion that evening there had been a great deal said that was very wide of the mark. Instead of being a debate upon the question of whether an import duty should be placed upon coal, honourable members had gone, he was going to say, all round the compass, including Protection *versus* Free-trade, and many other things which were entirely apart from the important question before the House. In the few remarks he wished to make he should endeavour to confine himself to the matter of coal. It was very remarkable that that night they had had the spectacle of three Ministers advocating an import duty upon coal and upon wheat. He could not help thinking, as he heard the Premier, the Colonial Treasurer, and the Minister of Education all advocating this course, that if there was such a consensus of opinion on this subject on the part of Ministers it was a very remarkable thing they had not treated it as a policy question and come down with this proposal themselves as part of their policy. The only argument that could appeal to him in connection with the proposal to put a duty on wheat was that it afforded the Protectionists in the House a weapon for dealing with the farmers. But they found that night that all, or nearly all, the farming representatives were opposing the duty; and they were placed therefore in this very remarkable position: that, while Ministers told them the duty was to be levied on wheat for the special benefit of farmers, those honourable members who specially represented the farming interest deprecated any such course. The Minister of Education had denied that this proposal to put a tax on wheat was in the interest of speculators and the persons holding wheat. Probably the honourable gentleman spoke with a larger knowledge than he (Mr. G. W. Russell) possessed on the subject, but he was somewhat familiar with what was the position in Canterbury, and, on account of the bad season, and of the necessity of farmers realising on every bushel of wheat they possessed, there was comparatively little wheat in Canterbury that had not passed into the hands of speculators and middlemen. That he believed absolutely to be the position; and therefore it would appear that if the effect of placing an import duty on wheat was to benefit anybody at all it would be most certainly more in favour of the middlemen than of those who had grown it. With regard to the coal, it appeared to him the main question was, Would the placing of an import duty on coal cheapen the price of coal, or make it dearer? They must recognise the fact that at the present time the coal trade of the colony was in the hands of a very small and very powerful monopoly. So far as Wellington and Canterbury were concerned, they were in the hands of one of the greatest monopolists in the colony—he referred, of course, to the Union Steamship Company. Now, they must recognise the fact that this monopoly existed. If it did not exist, then Protection

might expand the industry and create more competition. But the fact was this: that, whilst the Minister of Education had stated the effect of the import duty would be to break up the ring, the effect would be to play right into the hands of the coal ring that existed at the present time. What was the position at Christchurch at present? The price there was £1 11s. 6d. for Newcastle coal, and about £1 16s. 6d. for Westport—a difference of 5s. Would the fact of placing 5s. a ton on Newcastle coal have the slightest effect in cheapening the price of Westport coal? Not a bit. The effect of it, undoubtedly, would be to raise the price of both Newcastle and Westport coal; and, instead of the people of Canterbury receiving the slightest benefit, there would be, as had already been hinted, a rise all round, and that would go straight into the pockets of the coal ring, which the Minister of Education said it would break up. There appeared to him to be something more in connection with this proposal than at first appeared to the eye, and, after the very pointed remarks which the Minister of Education made in connection with the boot industry, he could not help thinking that the honourable gentleman was at the present time riding for a fall. It appeared to him that one way of looking at what the honourable gentleman desired was that he seemed to wish a motion such as this to be rejected by the Protectionist party in order that he might go back to the Bootmakers' Union, in Christchurch, and other Protectionist societies there, and tell them the reason he could not get the Protection he wanted was that the House was not prepared to give Protection all round. If that was the motive, then very little would be obtained by it, because there was a very great distinction to be drawn between the boot industry and that which was now being considered by the House. He could tell the Minister that since the present Government had been in office the quantity of boots imported had greatly increased. In 1890 the value of boots imported was £127,000, and in 1893 it was £146,000, showing an increase during the time the present Government had been in office of £20,000 in the value of the imports of boots; and it was no wonder that a very large proportion of the bootmakers—not only in Christchurch, but in other parts of the colony—were crying out for more Protection, or for some revision of the tariff which would go in the direction of protecting the industry to which they belonged. But for the last three years, though a revision of the tariff had been promised by the Government, although it was one of the sacred promises on which their party gained a victory at the last election—because in the Financial Statement last year it was said the work of revising the tariff would be undertaken during the first session of the new Parliament—what had been the position during the session? The Government had been forced by the efforts of their own party to undertake the question of the tariff; and how far had they got? The Tariff Committee was considering the question, and there was about as much

chance of a revision of the tariff during this session as of almost any other impossible event. He, at any rate, had very little hope of a tariff revision during the session. It was very well for the Government to have a question like this to fall back upon, and to say that the members of their own party had prevented a revision of the tariff because of their attitude in regard to the mines on the West Coast; but he denied that they were entitled to any such position. What was the position of the coal industry? The year before last 678,000 tons of local coal were used in New Zealand, as against 125,000 tons of imported coal; so that this duty of 5s. or 2s. 6d. would absolutely affect only one ton of coal out of every six tons used in New Zealand at present; and he would like to ask, was a small result like that sufficient to risk the possibility of the coal used in the meat-freezing works and in connection with all other industries being raised in price? Could not the Government recognise that when they increased the price of coal, as this duty would do, they were attacking all the industries on which the industrial population of the colony lived? Could they not recognise that in thus attacking the price of coal they were affecting the power itself by which the factories were worked? And in connection with the meat-freezing industry every half-crown put on the coal employed for power was handicapping the wage-earning power and reducing the wages fund of the colony. That was the position from which these matters should be argued, because the total number of men employed in the coal industry only amounted to eighteen hundred, and if the colony shut out every ton of Newcastle coal it would only result in adding three hundred to the coal-miners of the country. And therefore he said that to increase the coal-mining population by three hundred would not be a sufficient compensation for increasing the price of coal with regard to domestic requirements and all the industries of the colony. He quite indorsed the proposals of the Government in the Financial Statement with regard to bonuses on coal exported. He thought in advocating a bonus for developing the coal industry they were progressing in the right direction; but he maintained that the remedy for the position stated that night was not to be found in connection with an import duty on coal, but it was to be found by the Government facing the position and opening up coal-mines to be owned and worked by the State. When he had interjected a remark to that effect he understood the Minister of Education to approve of it; but they had already had an indication from the Government. Before the session was a week old he (Mr. Russell) had asked the question whether the Government were prepared to bring down legislation during the present session to enable them to open one or more State coal-mines. That was a distinct issue laid before the Government, and he did it with the express intention of indicating that, in his opinion, something should be done in that direction. The Minister of Mines had an-

Mr. G. W. Russell

swered him in what he thought at the time was rather a cavalier manner, to the effect that the Government had so many other important questions to consider that they could not undertake to do what was asked. Yet the Minister of Education admitted it was one of the remedies which should proceed side by side with Protection. That honourable gentleman said it was useless to open State coal-mines until you had Protection. But they found the Government bringing down Protection, and doing nothing to open State coal-mines. He wished that, in connection with such a matter as this,—the opening of State coal-mines, and working to reduce the price of coal,—the Government would adopt a broad, Liberal, and progressive policy. If they did that they would accomplish what all desired—reduce the price of coal—and they certainly would not do anything towards playing into the hands of the coal ring. If they wanted the colony to progress they must cheapen railway freights so far as such matters as coal were concerned. And here he would refer to a remark of the honourable member for Auckland City (Mr. Crowther). He referred to Newcastle coal being one of the largest commodities of import into Auckland. But he might remind the honourable gentleman of the Taupiri coal, which he knew the honourable gentleman would admit was a very fine coal, and about equal to Newcastle coal. The Railway Commissioners arranged for their supply of this Taupiri coal for 1893 at 3s. 10d. per ton. And did the honourable gentleman mean to tell him that if coal could be produced at that price eighty miles out of Auckland it was necessary to impose a duty of 5s.? In connection with the Railway Committee, they had lately been inquiring into a large coal question, and had certain facts before them, and he thought he was correct in saying that one of the coal companies on the West Coast had its coal won for 2s. 5d. per ton, and another for 2s. 10d. But what did they find the price paid by the Railway Commissioners for it in Wellington at present? They had made a contract for the present year for their coal delivered in Wellington for 19s. 9d. per ton; so that between the two places, if you allowed, say, 3s. per ton for the miner, there was 16s. 9d. per ton by the time it was delivered in Wellington. With regard to Napier, the price paid by the Commissioners was £1 3s. 3d., at Picton £1 4s., at Nelson £1 1s., and so on. Looking at these prices one could but feel that, if the country was paying high prices like that for coal in large quantities, it followed that such prices could only obtain because of there being a monopoly which required to be broken up, and they were not going to break that monopoly by putting an import duty on coal that came from beyond the country. The only way to break the monopoly was for the State to exercise its natural and legitimate functions, to take the question of the coal into its own hands, as it took the railways, and insist that the price of coal to the people of New Zealand should not exceed the cost, always allowing the workmen a fair price. There was no reason why the

Government should not at an early date purchase one or more steamers, and let them run to the State coal-mines on the West Coast, and deliver coal to the railways in different parts of the colony, as might be required. This was the policy on which the Government should go, and he felt sure if they did so they would receive the support not only of the general section of their party, but also of the party lately characterized as the left wing.

Mr. REEVES said the honourable gentleman had said that he had got the motion moved in order that he might go back to his constituents and show that it was impossible for the Government to bring down a duty on boots and shoes.

Mr. G. W. RUSSELL said the honourable gentleman was putting words into his mouth that he did not use.

Mr. REEVES said the honourable gentleman appeared to him, so far as he could understand, to say that the Government had got the motion moved in order that the Minister of Education might go back to his constituents—especially the Bootmakers' Union in Christchurch—and point out to them the impossibility of getting the tariff question settled, because of the attitude taken up on the coal tariff.

Mr. G. W. RUSSELL protested he did not say that. He said that was one way in which the motion might be regarded.

Mr. REEVES said, then the honourable gentleman had insinuated it. He had only to say that it was without a vestige of foundation. He had not the most distant notion that the honourable member for the Buller was going to move the motion till he did so.

Captain RUSSELL intended to follow the example of the honourable member for Riccarton and would not attempt to go into the question of the advantages of Free-trade or Protection. But this was what they might all agree to be an epoch. When three Ministers got up one after the other and said that their policy was, and the policy of the House should be, increased taxation on the necessities of life, he thought it was the duty of every person who took exactly opposite views, as he had done during the whole time he had been in public life, to utter a protest, even though it were a short one, at so very monstrous a proposition. The Premier might laugh, but there was no other interpretation of the policy which was laid down, after deliberation, by three Ministers of the Crown, than that they were anxious to impose extra taxation on the necessities of life, and therefore on those who were least able to bear it. It was no new idea on their part. All of them had come, more or less unexpectedly, to debate the resolution except the Ministers. The Financial Statements of the last two years had told them that Ministers were certainly deliberating on a reform of the tariff, and here was the outcome of their deliberation. During the past two years they had been intending to impose further taxation on everything most essential to health and comfort, and in daily use by those least blessed with this world's goods. The arguments of the honourable gentlemen had gone in that direc-

tion, and when the Minister of Education was speaking he argued that they must have a tax on coal and on wheat if we were not prepared to see our artisans go without work. It seemed to him, if there was one way to make our artisans go without work, it was, first of all, to tax that commodity without which work could not proceed—namely, coal—and, next, to tax that article of food which it was necessary a man should have before he was capable of work—namely, his daily bread. And yet, to enable him to do his work, and to get more work, it was proposed to tax that which was called the staff of life and that which enabled the wheels of industry to go round. It did seem to him that the merest tiro in politics could not have been guilty of enunciating so wonderful a policy as that by taxing coal and bread you were going to advance the interests of artisans. To him it was a most extraordinary proposition. One of the immediate effects of taxing coal would be to diminish the trade of Auckland. One of the principal trades of Auckland was the export of its timber to Australia, and

120. coal came back. If they were to tax the coal imported into Auckland, the very first effect would be to ruin a trade upon which much of the prosperity of Auckland depended. Then the Minister of Labour went on to say that unless they went in for a policy of Protection, and loyally supported one another in the endeavour to get a Protective tariff, they would never succeed. What did that mean? That the wretched farmers were to be taxed all round, in the disguise of what was called a Protection policy. How were they to benefit the farming community by such a process as that? The idea of putting a tax upon wheat benefitting the farmers! Nobody, apparently, seemed to appreciate the reason why there had been a special importation of Adelaide wheat into New Zealand this year. The reason was that in New Zealand they had been unfortunate in having a wet harvest, and of course the bakers would insist upon having a certain quantity of dry wheat to improve the quality of their bread. Therefore, the effect of taxing the Adelaide wheat that came into New Zealand would be that they would have to pay more for bread, or in all probability they would get an inferior class of bread. It was a well-known fact that there had been a certain quantity of bad wheat ground up whenever the season had been a wet one; on this account the quality of New Zealand flour had been somewhat indifferent, and it was necessary to import hard wheat. There were, he knew, certain taxes at present in favour of the farming community; and he had no doubt the farmers were grateful accordingly, or they ought to be. There were import duties upon bacon, ham, butter, cheese, and chaff, and no doubt some might think the farmers were benefited by these duties. If, however, honourable members would take the trouble to turn up the statistics they would find that this magnificent concession to the farmers was of a value of about £100, or certainly not £1,000 for the whole colony. There was absolutely nothing

Captain Russell

in it at all. The Minister of Education had told the House that some gentleman of standing in New South Wales had said that if he had his way he would keep every product from New Zealand out of New South Wales.

An Hon. MEMBER.—Hear, hear.

Captain RUSSELL was not surprised at the honourable gentleman saying, "Hear, hear," but why the Minister of Education should have followed that up by what he said afterwards he could not understand; but it was very amusing. The honourable gentleman had said that the only way was to retaliate, and carry the war into the enemy's camp. He understood that industrial warfare was to cease under the Conciliation and Arbitration Act the honourable gentleman had passed during the previous fortnight, and he was surprised that he should advocate a return to reprisals.

Mr. REEVES.—Under my Bill it is to cease on both sides—not on one side only.

Captain RUSSELL did not wish to detain the House any longer, as it was quite useless to go on protesting; but he would like to draw the attention of the House to one fact: The present proposal, which was called protective, but which he considered was injurious to every class of the community, was practically at variance with the tariff now in existence, and which the Government were mainly responsible for. The principle underlying the tariff at the present time was to admit every article that is used in manufactures in the colony duty-free, or as nearly so as possible. There would be a tax upon saddlery, but saddlers' ironmongery, webbing, and every article used in the manufacture of saddles and harness would be admitted duty-free. The manufactured article would be subject to taxation, but the principle of the tariff was to admit free all articles to be used in manufactures, so as to encourage manufactures in the colony. But how were manufactures to progress if they were to be subject to taxation on their first necessity—coal? They lately had a discussion as to the railways being run at cheaper rates so as to enable settlement to spread in the colony, but if they imposed further taxation upon coal, and by this means raised the cost of running trains, it was difficult to see how cheapening of transit was to be effected, or how settlers were to be induced to settle in the waste places of the colony. Then, there was the assertion that the monopoly in the coal trade and the high price of coal were the outcome of Free-trade. It was easy to understand how Protection, with its restricted trade and consequent high price, could bring about such a result, but it was mere assertion that Free-trade could induce such circumstances: but, in any case, a tax upon coal could only increase the price, and quadruple the restrictions upon trade.

Mr. SAUNDERS had listened, as one of the humble supporters of the Government, with great attention to the speech of the Premier that evening. When the Premier wished the House to go into Committee of Supply, and asked honourable members to hold their

tongues for that purpose, he (Mr. Saunders) was so anxious to obey that he had tried to sleep, but the speech of the honourable gentleman and the speeches of his colleagues had aroused him so completely that he had found it impossible to get even the smallest nap. He did not think that, in the course of his long political life, he had ever seen such a striking illustration of how little wisdom it took to govern a country. As he listened to the speeches made from the Government benches he could imagine nothing more absolutely at variance with all the professions those honourable gentlemen had made than the avowal that the country was to have a tax upon coal and grain—upon the food and comfort of the poor. To compensate the farmers, they were to have a large tax upon grain. He wished to say that if they were to put 5s. a bushel as a tax upon imported corn it would not make sixpence difference to any farmer in the colony. New Zealand was not an importing but an exporting colony, and a tax upon imported grain would help the farmers no more than would a tax upon imported wool, as neither would be imported. He was quite sure that, simple as the farmers were, they were not simple enough to believe that a tax on wheat would be any compensation to them for a general policy of Protection, in which they would be the victims and the sufferers, in order that some one else might be the gainer. Both of the taxes now defended by Ministers were simply preposterous. He did not believe for a moment that there was any one who would derive advantage from a policy of Protection. Protection always meant injury to the many for the supposed benefit of a very few. They had had a great many speeches made that evening, some of them very sensible and some quite the reverse. There was the speech made by the honourable member for Masterton, the first part of which was very good indeed. The honourable gentleman pointed out the fact that they imported almost everything they required for their daily use. They imported shoes, boots, clothes, jams, and luxuries, notwithstanding a 25-per-cent. duty. And why did they import those things? The honourable gentleman thought it was because they did not put on enough Protection—because they did not raise the duty on these articles to 5, 10, 20, 30, or 50 per cent., in order that they might be manufactured at home. The first part of the honourable gentleman's speech was good; it was instructive. He had pointed out how completely Protection had failed to force home manufacture: but he was entirely wrong as to the cause of failure, and mad in his proposed increases. The honourable member ought to see how completely his facts told against his argument, and revealed the true reason why they had the unemployed, and the reason that manufactures could not and would not flourish in the colony. They could have manufactures whenever they liked, but they must have them at a great price, because they must have them at the price of labour coming down very much lower than at present, which

was only an unnatural, nominal price, obtained by a few of the ablest and strongest, to the cruel exclusion of the many. He would say what no other man in that House would dare to say, but he was going to say it because it was true: that the greater portion of the unionist men at the present time were pulling a rope at each end. They had the rope around the post, and they could draw it either way if they liked; but instead of that they pulled both together, and therefore they made no progress. There was a very simple way of having manufactures or of not having manufactures. They could have manufactures if they allowed the people to work who wished to work. Let their boys, girls, women, and men work as they liked without any interference, and they would work at a price that they could get paid for the produce of their work. Then they could have manufactures: but if they would not allow the people to work at practical prices they would have no manufactures. And it was no good to talk about it if they would not allow the population to work as they wanted to work. Even low wages were better than pauperism, and far better than a painful exclusion from employment at any price. The Minister of Lands had one of the most difficult tasks to accomplish that any man could possibly have. His object had been a most earnest one—namely, to settle the people on the land—and there they had in the coal question evidence of the determination of the people not to settle on the land. People would not settle on the land and work for 2s. 6d. a day at the hard toil which a man must use if he wished to be successful at the commencement of his enterprise on land, if they could get 10s. and 12s. a day, which was proposed to be given them under the system of 5s. a ton duty on imported coal. Why did they want any protection against New South Wales? They could get better coal than New South Wales. They had thicker seams, and a very short distance to carry the coal by water; and why could not they compete against New South Wales? Simply because they would not allow their population to work as the Australians worked; because they allowed the miners of the West Coast to keep up a sort of standing army to prevent any one from working at a lower price than themselves. Then, they allowed the Union Company, with their fine boats, to charge more for the carriage of this coal for a distance of 100 miles than the Sydney people charged for carrying it 1,800 miles. Both of those things wanted altering. What advantage was it to this country if a thousand or twelve hundred miners were receiving 12s. a day, when their farming-men earned only 4s. a day, and were actually begging for work at that rate?

Mr. MORRISON.—The miners do not earn more than 4s. 6d. a day.

Mr. SAUNDERS.—Well, he had been told by the honourable gentleman who brought in this resolution that they earned from 10s. to 12s. a day on the West Coast.

An Hon. MEMBER.—Three days a week.

Mr. SAUNDERS.—Three days a week? That was the natural, the inevitable, result of what he was saying. If they were determined to keep up a high rate of wages by working only three days a week, then, of course, they could never produce coal at the same price as other countries. Why not work six days a week at a reasonable price? That would enable the coal to be sold at such a price that no foreign coal could compete with it. It was all artificial nonsense to talk of employing just the cream of the population—the strongest and ablest portion of the population—at some unnatural price, and leaving all the rest of the population unemployed and actually begging for work, as they saw them begging in every direction—a hundred men and women begging for every single vacancy at the artificial prices. That was the position in which we were placed; and it was just as well they should understand what they were talking about, and understand that, if they kept up these high wages, they could compete with other countries in nothing. For a long time men were able to earn high wages on our goldfields, and as long as that continued this would never be a manufacturing country, and never ought to be, and we must make up our minds to import all the manufactured goods we required, without doubling the price on the whole body of consumers. But if we could no longer do that, the only thing was to manufacture our goods at a price that would enable us to keep foreign goods out of the market. But let them not suppose for a moment that the country was ever to be prosperous if they were going to try to prevent our boys, our women, and our inferior labourers from earning something—of course, they could not earn tiptop wages. If they were going to insist on a policy of that kind they had simply to make up their minds that everything they wanted in the way of manufactures must be imported, and they need not say anything about wanting manufactories in this country, or wanting employment for our population. We had had enough of this dishonest policy. We had had quite enough of the towns protecting themselves at the expense of the country—quite enough of this policy of the towns doing all they could to force manufactures in this colony, under the most unnatural and impossible circumstances, at the expense of raising the price of loaves and of the necessary comforts of life, and even of the very coal that was employed in our factories and freezing-ships. What would our farmers lose in their meat by raising the price of coal in this country, when every vessel that came here to take Home our meat required a cargo of coal in order to keep it frozen on the passage! Would not the farmers have to pay the extra price of the coal needed for that purpose? Of course they must. He did not care what they talked about a duty on wheat. They could not, by putting a duty on wheat, protect the farmers. They could not put on any tax that would protect them. They wanted to produce manufactures under utterly unnatural and impossible

circumstances, and they wanted to make the agricultural community of this colony pay the exorbitant prices at which they were prepared to produce those manufactures. Let them adopt a wise and sensible policy. Let them get to understand that they could either have manufactures or not. If they could keep wages so high that all could earn 12s. a day at coal-, or gold-, or silver-mining, or anything else, let them do it by all means; but, if they could not do that, do not let half our population stand idle and the other half be taxed so as to be deprived almost of the common comforts of life in order that we might pretend to manufacture what we could not manufacture at market-prices under the circumstances in which we were determined to live. This motion asked two hundred thousand persons, who were not earning 2s. a day, to pay a famine price for their coal, in order that twelve hundred miners might get 12s. a day for three days in the week.

Mr. McGUIRE must heartily congratulate the honourable member who had just sat down. He had made one of the most sensible speeches he had heard in the House, and if they acted upon what he told them this country would be in a thoroughly sound position, one that would extricate us from the difficulties that gathered round us. These were the difficulties as far as labour was concerned and people out of employment, because, if they carried out a policy on the lines suggested by the honourable gentleman, he was perfectly certain there would be no unemployed in the country at the present time. What really surprised him was that the honourable gentleman, after the statements he had made that night, showing that he thoroughly disagreed with the present Government, should be still supporting them. That was the greatest surprise to him of all. He had no doubt that what the honourable gentleman had said was true, every word of it, and it was simply the high rates that were paid to the miners for wages that were causing the high prices that were charged for coal, and we could never expect to export coal so long as wages ruled at 12s. a day. He would not have risen to speak at all had it not been for the statement made by the honourable member for Ashley. He made the statement that all agricultural implements were admitted free into this country, and he made that statement in contradiction of a statement made by the honourable member for Waitemata. Now, he had the Customs duties before him, and he could tell the House that this statement was altogether without foundation, and that, in fact, a great number of these articles paid duty. He would enumerate one or two of them that paid duty. For instance: Hay-rakes, horse-rakes, horse-powers, chaff-cutters, corn-crushers, corn-shellers, certain of the fittings for ploughs, and fittings for reapers-and-binders. Such things as fencing-wire and binder-twine paid very heavy duties, and there were many other articles all of which paid 20 or 25 per cent. How an honourable gentleman who was so conscientious—for he always said he had a conscience

—could make such a statement was extraordinary to him. They had here the Customs tariff laid down for the guidance of the Customs officers, and all these articles were included. Now, in reference to coal, and the putting of an import duty on that article, he was altogether opposed to it. He thought a great deal had been done in the past with public money for the purpose of opening coal-mines. The Premier had that night stated that the colony had spent on harbour-works at Greymouth £300,000 of public moneys in order to assist the coal industry, and £500,000 at Hokitika; and the taxpayers of the colony had to pay the interest, with the object of assisting the mining industry on the West Coast. Was that not sufficient bonus in itself? He was surprised at the statements made by Ministers that night. They wanted members to believe that if they assisted the coal industry by giving a bonus on the exportation of coal they would assist the farmers by putting a tax on wheat. Now, he was perfectly certain farmers did not want such a tax; and the farmers he was acquainted with would unanimously object to it, for he came from a district where all the farmers were thorough believers in Free-trade; and he was perfectly certain Free-trade would be the future policy of this country. He was therefore pained to hear three Ministers that night state that they were ready to tax both food and fuel. He must again congratulate the honourable member for Selwyn, who had entered so fully into the argument that evening, and he hoped Ministers would take warning from his statements, because what he had said, if carried out, would be for the true advantage of New Zealand.

Mr. MONTGOMERY saw that the Premier and the Minister of Education were somewhat impatient, and he thought that if they expressed their true sentiments to the House it would be somewhat in the manner of the Maori member who spoke last night—to this effect: "These Bills are shadowy Bills; they prevent us from going into Supply." However, he would not take up the time of the House at any length. The hour was too late and life was too short altogether to go into the question of Free-trade and Protection; and, at any rate, he was not going to occupy the time in that way, but he thought it was only right for members of the Liberal party to raise their voices against any proposed taxation on the necessaries of life, and it was for that reason he had now risen. He thought the debate had been particularly opportune in one respect. He meant in this way: The House and the party had had an opportunity of expressing their wishes and their thoughts on a subject which might hereafter come before them. They had had an opportunity of expressing their wishes to Ministers before any policy was brought down, and Ministers had an opportunity of judging now what was the mind of the House. They had been made acquainted with the minds of the party they were leading in the House, and he hoped they had realised that there could be no doubt the great majority of the Liberal

party were against increased taxation on the necessaries of life, and that the Government would therefore refrain from carrying out their suggested intention of putting duties on coal and wheat. He was astonished to hear the three Ministers speak as they did. The Premier said that there were certain coal-mines in his district—presumably he meant the Mokihinui Company and other companies—which were now suffering greatly because of the low price of coal, and could not proceed with the working of the mines, and so on; and he evidently wanted the House to agree to bring in some form of legislation which would enable these companies to pay a handsome dividend, and to enable all those workmen to be employed. How could this be done? There was only one way in which it could be done, and that was that the price of coal should be considerably raised, in order to enable the companies to pay dividends. That was the only way in which wages could be paid, and these companies put on a firm footing. But what would be the result of raising the price of coal? It had been stated by every member who had spoken that night that those who had to pay the tax were those who used the coal, and that the people who would be taxed the most would undoubtedly be the farmers of the country, because it was they who did the chief portion of the exporting trade. The export trade was carried on by steamers, and they, of course, used a great quantity of coal. The House was asked, therefore, to place a tax on the farmers of the country in order to aid a certain number of miners and mining companies on the West Coast.

An Hon. MEMBER.—That would not aid them.

Mr. MONTGOMERY thought it would aid them, to some extent; but the result would be, if they placed this tax upon coal, that it would be impossible afterwards to take it off again. It would be found, just as happened in America, that once they put on protective duties it was impossible to take them off without causing severe depression among the working-men of the community.

12.30. It was like a man taking a tonic—it was hard to leave it off. Then, they had the Minister of Education, who gave them a very clever speech on the subject; the honourable gentleman, in speaking, like Goldsmith, "touched nothing that he did not adorn." He felt all through the honourable gentleman's speech that if he had spoken on the other side of the question he would have put it in a much more forcible and direct way. Many of the arguments he used were arguments which should not fall from the lips of one who was so capable of using the best arguments possible. They were not sound arguments, and he did not think they would go down in the House. He would give an example of one of them. The honourable gentleman stated that the result of a Free-trade policy was that there were rings in the coal-trade in Wellington, and all over New Zealand. Surely if he contrasted the countries that now

followed Free-trade with the country that practised the policy of Protection he must admit that the number of rings and syndicates was not increasing in the country where there was the greatest amount of Free-trade, and that rings and combinations were the curse of America, the home of the Protective tariff. He did not think, when the honourable gentleman thought seriously over it, he would still say that Free-trade brought about rings and syndicates in any shape or form; and, if he did say so, the House would not believe him. With regard to coal, he would just repeat what one or two other honourable members had said—namely, that the only effect of this tax on coal would be to raise its price. An honourable member said it would not raise the price of coal. Then, if it did not, how would it enable companies on the West Coast, at Mokihinui and elsewhere, to produce coal at a greater profit to themselves?

An Hon. MEMBER.—They will produce more.

Mr. MONTGOMERY asked how much coal was imported? He had heard it stated that it was only about 130,000 or 140,000 tons, and that in Auckland, where the coal was imported, the price was very much lower than in the other parts of the colony; and he had not the slightest doubt that if the importation of coal to Auckland were stopped the price would materially rise. There would be a large demand on the local coal, and the mines in that district would not be able to supply it, with the result that there would be an increase in the price. It was just the same as a tax on any necessary of life—it would fall directly on the working-man and the farmers. Now just a word about the wheat. He considered a tax on wheat was simply a return to the old corn-laws they had taken years to destroy in England. He hoped this one night's debate would be sufficient in New Zealand. Just a word about reciprocity, and he might say that he fully recognised that what the Premier said had a good deal of force in it—namely, if they could succeed, by this policy proposed by him, or by any other policy, in inducing Australia to take in the imports of New Zealand they should be doing a great thing. If they could succeed in introducing into Australia New Zealand articles free it would be a great thing for New Zealand. But when it was said by the Hon. the Minister of Education that this was not a policy of "bluff," but was intended to help the working-men of this country, when he stated that this was a policy apart altogether from the question of reciprocity with Australia, he (Mr. Montgomery) did not agree with him. The question of reciprocity seemed to have resolved itself into this: He regarded it as a mutual advantage to both countries, that each should produce what it could produce best. It was certainly a great advantage to New Zealand to send her produce there. It was a question whether it was a disadvantage for New Zealand to receive Australian products here. In fact, he questioned very much whether it was not a good thing for New Zealand to receive products from other colonies

free, whether New Zealand got her products taken into other countries free or not. At any rate, he would not be a party to introducing new duties on the necessaries of life.

Mr. PIRANI said, of course he opposed this motion, as he thought any man of common-sense ought to do. He could not understand the position of members of the Government, who proposed to offer a bonus for the export of coal, and, at the same time, wished to support a duty on the import of coal. To his mind, the two positions were entirely illogical, and could not be made in any way to square themselves. He thought it would be of far greater importance than offering a bonus on the export of coal, or putting a duty on the import of it, if some attention were paid by Government to the manner in which our coal deposits were being wasted. If that were done, and some attention were paid to the coal-measures, in a somewhat similar manner to the assistance given to the dairying, fruit, and other industries, far more permanent good would be done to the country. He also opposed the motion on the ground that they should not impose any further burdens on the necessaries of life. It seemed a pity that the direction in which the Government tended was to impose duties on fruit, on coal, and wheat. That was, he thought, entirely in the wrong direction, and he should on that account give his vote against all these duties.

Mr. R. McKENZIE wished to explain that the Government had no knowledge whatever of his intention to move the amendment he had moved that day on going into Committee of Supply. He had thought he would take an opportunity of having a discussion on the question. He had had a notice on the Order Paper bearing on this question in the first week of the session.

Mr. ALLEN hoped the explanation of the honourable gentleman was satisfactory to the Government, and he had no doubt it was. He also hoped the debate that had taken place was satisfactory to the Government, but he had no doubt it was not. The debate had been an interesting one, and he had been wondering during the course of the debate what had been the reason for it. Did Ministers want to test the feeling of the House? If they did, let them go to the country and ask the people what they thought about a tax on wheat and bread and coal. Let them put the free breakfast-table against the dear loaf, and see what the country would say. Or, if they wished, let them go to the country with a duty of 5s. a ton on coal. He was interested in coal, and was a proprietor himself, and he represented a district with several coal-mines in it; and he had no fear in saying there, or on any platform in his constituency, that it was not to the interest of the miner to impose a duty on coal. It might possibly be temporarily to the interest of the coal proprietor in some places, and it might be, for a short time, in his own interest; but should he do right to sacrifice his constituency and the whole of the rest of the colony for a temporary gain to himself, or should he be right in arguing that the whole of

Mr. Montgomery

the rest of the colony should be taxed in order that the coal proprietors in his own district might obtain a temporary benefit? No member of the House who represented his constituency in reality, and who desired to help the country, would for a moment use such an argument. He wanted to draw attention to one remark that was made by the Minister of Education. He had taken down the remark, and he hoped the Minister would correct him if he was wrong. The honourable gentleman was talking about the duty on coal, and he said, "I see no reason to suppose that the price of coal will be permanently raised." He (Mr. Allen) wanted to draw attention to that remark, and to ask what it really meant. It had been the contention of Protectionists time after time, when putting a duty on any article, that it would not raise the price. What did that sentence of the Minister mean?—"I see no reason to suppose that the price of coal will be permanently raised." Let any one who could interpret a sentence at all interpret that language, and was not the interpretation this: that the price of coal would at any rate be temporarily raised, and it might be raised permanently? There could be no other interpretation. The honourable gentleman had put it in a little different language in order to cover up his meaning.

Mr. REEVES said the honourable gentleman misrepresented him. He did not mean that.

Mr. ALLEN asked the honourable gentleman if these were the words used: "I see no reason to suppose that the price of coal will be permanently raised."

Mr. REEVES.—Yes; I said that.

Mr. ALLEN said he believed the interpretation he put upon it was correct. The Minister might say what he liked, but he would leave the House and the country to judge. The only interpretation that could be made was this: that the price of coal would be temporarily raised, and might be permanently raised. And if that was true of a duty on coal, it was true of all protective duties, and that went to the root of the whole argument—that the putting of a duty on coal or upon wheat would raise the price of those two necessities. If that was to be the policy of Ministers, let them have it, and let them go to the country upon it and see what the country said.

Mr. COLLINS had waited for some time to make a few remarks, though at the outset he had not intended to speak on the subject at all, being under the impression that the House was desirous of getting on with other business. But he felt now that it was necessary to express one's opinion on the subject. He came into that House as one fully determined to do his utmost to bring about, if possible, a revision of the tariff. It was a distinct pledge to his constituency that he should endeavour to maintain for them what was known as the free breakfast-table, and for that reason he felt profound regret that that particular debate had been raised upon that particular question. It appeared to him that the result of

that debate would be to shelve the revision of the tariff. He could see no other result. They had had a number of speeches from a number of members who were just as much interested as he was in bringing about a revision of the tariff, and they had had those speeches in opposition to a motion before the House. That could scarcely be otherwise. There was a strong feeling in the country that there should not be any import duties on the first necessities of life, and he, for one, should not support the imposition of import duties upon those necessities. They would have another opportunity of discussing this matter, and, as the general question of reciprocity, Protection, and Free-trade had been raised in the House, he took this opportunity of protesting against some of the fallacies that had been put before them. What were the main objections which had been raised against the protective duty? They had been told that they ought to do nothing in this country to irritate New South Wales—that they ought to do nothing in this country to irritate those who were flooding our market with goods made by the pauper artisans of other countries. Now, he was far more concerned about the irritation of the workers in our country by those in other countries. They would not be very likely to irritate New South Wales, but New South Wales was irritating the workers of New Zealand, and they had a right to prevent New South Wales doing that. They had a right to prevent Germany and the old countries from irritating the workers of New Zealand, and the first care in that House should be for the workers of their own country rather than for those who lived elsewhere. Then they had been told that, if they were to increase the trade of the country, the workers must be prepared to work for lower wages. These were the two arguments which had been advanced against the revision of the tariff—the irritation that would be caused to other countries by protective duties, and the fact that workers must work for lower wages. They were to be very careful not to irritate other countries. He would undertake to say that no more fallacious reasons had ever been adduced against the imposition of protective duties than those two reasons. There was no need now to go over the ground that had been already so fully discussed by other members. But he would like to point out that, while our woollen-mills and our boot-factories were on short time, and while our furniture-makers were walking the streets, they might go to other countries and they would find that the goods that were being sold here were manufactured in the woollen-mills of Leeds, of Bradford, of Huddersfield, and of Halifax; and they would find that nearly two hundred thousand pounds' worth of boots were coming into the country annually that were made in Northampton, Leicester, and Derby—while our workmen were walking the streets or employed only for half-time. Well, he must protest against this state of things. The country demanded that the Chinese should not be admitted—that they should be kept out; and Parliament was asked to increase

the poll-tax. Were they to admit Chinese-made goods free, but not to admit the Chinese themselves? If the goods were to be allowed to come in free, it would be better to have the Chinese come here and do the work here, rather than that they should send their work here and live in China. And the same applied to other goods made by pauper labour. He must resent the idea that our workers in New Zealand were to come down to the general level of the underpaid workers of the old countries. The conditions of our country were such, and ought to be maintained as such, that the workers of New Zealand could obtain a livelihood incomparably superior to that obtained by the workers in the Old Country. Therefore he for one would venture to protest against this discussion being taken as a criterion of the feelings of the House upon these questions. It only indicated the feeling of the House with regard to the imposition of import duties upon the first necessities of life; in no sense was it a test of the feeling of the House on the general question of Protection and Free-trade.

Mr. DUNCAN would not occupy the House very long, but must speak, because he had never listened to such talk as he had heard that night, though he had been in the House during the last sixteen sessions. The whole thing amounted to very nearly nothing. They had heard of the theories of Herbert Spencer and Henry George, of the theories of Protection and Free-trade, but they did not want either Protection or Free-trade here, but fair trade, and, to get that fair trade, when occasion should arise it was right to put on duties on any article that came into the country. He thought at this juncture it was a perfectly right and legitimate thing to do under the circumstances. The circumstances were these: that two years ago the articles New Zealand exported to New South Wales had heavy duty put upon them—a very heavy duty as against New Zealand. He might say the farmers of this colony had been shut out of the market there. He spoke as a farmer, and would say that the exports which had been sent there had been sent at a loss on account of the duty that had been put on for the purpose of shutting them out. Now, he was quite prepared to vote for this motion, and on that very ground he was not at all afraid to meet either the farmers or the townspeople. He represented a mixed community, about one-half townspeople and the other half farmers, so that he must be prepared to meet both; and he was prepared to do so, and to tell them that he was in favour of the imposition of this duty. Supposing they put this duty on coal: was it really for the purpose of raising revenue? No; they did not expect any revenue from it, but to prohibit coal from coming in. That was exactly what they wanted; and he was prepared to say that they should prohibit anything from coming from the other colonies, until they came to a fair understanding and would give this colony fair trade. He was not prepared to fix the duties for any length of time, but in the meantime he thought it was the right thing to im-

Mr. Collins

pose them, and, when they got—as they would get—a conference about reciprocity within a short time, they would have something to give way upon. If they had nothing of this sort they would have very little chance of getting reciprocity from any other country. That was a right stand to take, and a reasonable way to look at it. The theories that had been mentioned were all right for the older countries, but what was all right for them might be all wrong for New Zealand. Then, with regard to the duty on grain. There had been a great deal of talk about it; but what did it amount to? During the last year, through the untoward weather and the damage to the wheat, they had a short crop; but this was the first time it had occurred to his knowledge, and he had been farming for nearly thirty years, and it might be another thirty years before the protective duty on wheat could apply again. So that it did not matter very much whether they put the tax on wheat at the present time or not. The only reason for imposing it was to show that they were determined to hold their own, and not to give way unless the others gave way as well as they did. We wanted fair trade. But the tax on wheat could not be intended for revenue purposes. There might be a few cargoes coming in during the next three months, but he could assure them that unless the weather was different from what it used to be there would be no further import of wheat here after that. The amount of revenue that could be received would be very small indeed, but the imposition of the duty would arm this colony with a reason for meeting the others and regulating the tariffs. He was prepared to vote both for the tax on coal and the duty on wheat at the present time, and was not at all frightened by the talk they had heard; nor was he at all afraid that the loaf would be $\frac{1}{2}$ d. dearer, or that coal would advance in price 1s. a ton in consequence of these duties. He believed that the coal would not only be not dearer, but that it would be cheaper. They were not depending upon a single ton of coal from Newcastle. They had coal in all parts of New Zealand, from the north to the south, along the railway, on the east coast as well as on the west coast, and therefore they had no need to fear that coal was at all likely to be any dearer than it was at present. He was quite prepared to vote for the motion, and to give to every farmer in the country and to every man in the town his reason for voting for it. He voted for it on this ground: that they were doing what they had a right to do in an extreme case like what their position was at a time like this, and what it was prudent to do if they intended to get reciprocity or fair trade with the other colonies. He would be prepared, if that were brought about, to abolish the duty on every single item of trade between this colony and Australia, and would vote for that whenever the question came before the House. When the division came he would be found supporting the motion.

Mr. PINKERTON had had no intention of speaking, but he had heard one or two remarks

which caused him to think it was right he should say something. In the first place, the question of Free-trade and Protection had, he thought, been quite unnecessarily raised. In his opinion, they should have confined themselves to the amendment before the House. He might say at once that he should vote against the amendment, and he would give his reasons for so doing. The question of Free-trade and Protection did not necessarily come into this debate. Free-traders, as a rule, voted on this principle: that in levying duties they must do so for revenue purposes only—that you must so adjust the tariff that it would have a beneficial effect on the industries of the country. On the other hand, Protectionists maintained that it was right to allow raw materials to come in free, while imposing a tariff rate on manufactured goods. There was always, or at any rate in most cases, a difficulty in saying what was an unfinished article; for an article that was a finished article for one trade was raw material for another trade. But, as regarded coal, he thought there could be no question that that in every trade was a raw material. It was the basis of all mechanical motive-power; and, as had been said, it had even a connection with the question of a free breakfast-table. They could not cook their food without fire, and consequently they could not have a free breakfast-table if they had a duty on coal. They had been told that this duty would not raise the price of coal, and he thought a most fallacious illustration had been given by his honourable friend the member for Marsden. That honourable gentleman was usually very logical, but he thought he had been very illogical that evening, and he was rather confirmed in that by his honourable friend the member for Auckland City (Mr. Crowther). The honourable member for Marsden had told them that coal was very cheap in Auckland, and he had also told them that Newcastle coal was freely imported into Auckland; therefore it really followed that it was because imported coal went to Auckland that coal was so cheap there. If Newcastle coal did not go there coal would be as dear there as in other places. The honourable member for Auckland City (Mr. Crowther) had said that something like 2s. or 3s. a ton on coal would employ a number of miners who were not now unemployed. That would probably be the case; but what would be its effect on other trades? The fact was, they were proposing to begin at the wrong end—they would, by this proposal, benefit the few by injuring the many. He thought the proper policy was that they should do good to as many as possible. The fact was, the duty on coal would have an opposite effect from what the honourable gentleman said. The Minister of Labour had made a statement which he (Mr. Pinkerton) did not think was altogether fair. He did not say that these were his exact words, but he understood him to say that he would be no party to protect boots and shoes in Christchurch and not to protect miners in other parts of the colony.

Mr. REEVES said he had not said that, and he would tell the honourable gentleman what

he did say. He had said that he would protect boots and shoes, but he would be no party to not taking into consideration the miner too.

1.0. Mr. PINKERTON said he took the other view of it, and thought he was correct in the view he took. With regard to the farmers, he had, as a rule, endeavoured, as far as he could in a legitimate way, to assist the farmers, but he thought they were overdoing it. Farmers got roads, railways, their produce carried more cheaply than other products were carried, and they got their lime carried for the cultivation of the soil, and all that sort of thing, and even experts from England to teach them how to produce the best results. He denied that the farmers were more philanthropic than other people in the community. Farmers were farmers because they selected the occupation as being the one best suited to them. They made their money and earned their living at farming, and it was out of no spirit of philanthropy that they became farmers. This kind of thing was slightly overdone. The honourable member for Ashley had referred sneeringly to men at street-corners and lamp-posts discussing public questions. It was an unfortunate thing that for want of work many men had to assemble at street-corners, but they did not assemble there in the sense the honourable member for Ashley put it. These men were quite capable of taking, and did take, a reasonable and rational view of things, and they could come to as reasonable and as logical a conclusion as the honourable member for Ashley could arrive at himself. There was another thing he should like to refer to, and that was with regard to something that had fallen from the honourable member for Selwyn. The honourable gentleman, in referring to trades-unions, said they could have no manufactures in the country unless they had cheap labour,—that if we were not prepared to employ labour at cheap rates there could be no manufactures. He said the aim of unions was to prevent men from taking employment at cheap rates, and to insist that the cream only of labour should be employed. The honourable member for Selwyn might know something about farming, and many other things, but he certainly knew nothing about the objects of trades-unions. He (Mr. Pinkerton) knew a little about them, and his experience of trades-unions was that they did not wish to deprive people of the opportunity of working if they liked, or to insist that the cream only of labour should be employed. What they considered was that the product of their labour should be equally divided amongst them, and that the employer should not mop up the whole of the product, and distribute just as much as he liked to the workers, and at such a price as he liked. The employer made his own conditions, and the workers had to take what was left, which was generally a little below what people could live on comfortably. To alter this state of things was what the unionists generally tried to do, and he spoke within his own knowledge when he said so.

Major HARRIS said it was a long time since

the debate on this amendment commenced, and he believed, at the time it was moved, it was in reference to coal, and a tax of so much per ton. It was so long ago that he hardly remembered it correctly. He wished to oppose the proposed import duty on coal, and, in doing so, he would give a few reasons for the course he intended to pursue. In bringing a matter of this kind forward it ought to refer to something more than this one article. If the revision of the tariff had been brought forward he would have supported it and voted for it, but he did not like to see this matter brought forward in a piecemeal fashion. He did not like to see one member bringing forward one particular article, and others bringing forward other articles, upon which they wished to have higher imposts made. If this subject had been gone into in a general way, and the honourable gentleman had moved for a revision of the tariff, he thought members generally would have gone in for it more cheerfully, and would have been better prepared than they were that evening. Although the discussion commenced with reference to one article, they found boots and shoes and every other article introduced. One honourable member, in the course of the debate, had stated that there had been more boots and shoes imported this year than previously. He (Major Harris) took that as a compliment to the Government, because it meant that there were more people with boots and shoes on their feet than there were last year. Although the harvest had been a very bad one down South he was glad to see people still going in for wearing boots. In regard to this article of coal, they knew very well that if any accident happened, such as a strike, the price of coal went up immediately; and they knew the result of the strike that occurred in Australia was that this Australian coal went up in price, and they found, as an immediate result in his district, that the blacksmiths raised the price of iron-work at once. Australian coal was usually used by them, and they took advantage of any rise in the price of coal to at once increase the charges for blacksmiths' work. That caused a very great deal of dissatisfaction among the settlers in the farming district he had the honour to represent. In consequence of that he was obliged to look carefully on this proposal, and to vote against the honourable gentleman. Then, supposing this coal did not, or could not, come from Australia, they would find rings formed in the coal trade, which would charge people for coal what they thought proper. In the Auckland District, where they knew how to form rings, if they had the slightest opportunity of charging more than they charged for coal at the present time they would do so immediately. They would form rings, they would buy up some coal-mines, and perhaps close them after having bought them, and would perhaps do what they thought proper to keep the price up all the time. If the Government would do what he should like to see them do, they would, wherever practicable, reduce the freight on coal and

Major Harris

make it cheap to the people. Nearly everybody used coal. The reason why it was so cheap in Auckland was that the vessels took the timber from the Auckland District to Australia, and on their return brought cargoes of coal.

An Hon. MEMBER.—And timber.

Major HARRIS said the more fools they were for buying timber brought from Australia when timber existed in New Zealand in such quantities. Of course, they had to pay the freight upon it from Australia. As representing a town constituency, the honourable member for Dunedin City (Mr. Pinkerton) said that farmers got roads and railways made for them, and had their produce—lime, *et cetera*—carried at cheaper rates than ordinary goods. It was well known to farmers that they had to pay for anything they got. They went in debt as much as possible to the Government for road-making, and got all they could by paying so much per cent. for it; so he thought the remark of the honourable gentleman was a very cruel and unfeeling one to make about the farmers. The question had also been discussed of putting an import duty on wheat. The amendment did not give them any idea they were going in that direction. He would give his vote in the direction that the people should have cheap bread. In the North Island it was known the farmers did not grow sufficient wheat for their own use, and to put a tax on wheat meant a tax on the loaves of the people of the North Island. He would certainly vote against the amendment.

Amendment negatived.

The House went into Committee of Supply.

IN COMMITTEE.

Mr. McGUIRE moved, That progress be reported.

The Committee divided.

AYES, 33.

Allen	Lang	Russell, G. W.
Bell	Mackenzie, T.	Russell, W. R.
Buddo	Maslin	Saunders
Buick	Massey	Smith, G. J.
Button	McNab	Steward
Crowther	Meredith	Tanner
Earnshaw	Mitchelson	Thompson
Graham	Montgomery	Wilson.
Green	Newman	<i>Tellers.</i>
Hall-Jones	O'Regan	Fraser
Hutchison, G.	Pirani	McGuire.
Kelly, W.		

NOES, 27.

Cadman	Houston	Reeves
Carncross	Joyce	Seddon
Carnell	Lawry	Smith, E. M.
Carroll	Mackintosh	Stevens
Collins	McKenzie, J.	Ward
Duncan	McKenzie, R.	Willis.
Flatman	Mills	<i>Tellers.</i>
Hall	Morrison	McGowan
Harris	Pinkerton	McLachlan.
Hogg		

PAIR.

<i>For.</i>	<i>Against.</i>
Buchanan.	Millar.

Majority for, 6.

Motion agreed to.
Progress reported.

The House adjourned at twenty-seven minutes to two o'clock a.m.

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

Friday, 31st August, 1894.

Second Readings—Third Reading—Standing Orders—Hamilton Domains Empowering Bill—Grey-mouth Harbour Board Empowering Bill—Dunedin Loan Conversion Bill—Gaming Bill.

The Hon. the SPEAKER took the chair at half-past two o'clock.

PRAYERS.

SECOND READINGS.

Eketahuna Cemetery Reserve Bill, Inangahua County Council Empowering Bill, Mount St. John Reserve Bill, Kaitangata Relief Fund Transfer Bill, Auckland Harbour Board Empowering Bill, Wellington Reclaimed Land Bill.

THIRD READING.

Ocean Beach Public Domain Bill.

STANDING ORDERS.

The Hon. Mr. FELDWICK moved, *That it be a recommendation to the Standing Orders Committee to take into consideration the expediency of bringing the Standing Orders of this Council, in respect to the procedure as regards local Bills, into harmony with those recently adopted by the House of Representatives.* He had become aware that there had been a change in the Standing Orders in another place, and, as the Standing Orders used to be joint, there was a discrepancy now which it was not desirable by any means to retain. One point which he might refer to was, that under the Legislative Council Standing Orders any proposed local Bill had to be deposited at the Courthouse of the locality; but under the new rule adopted in another place it was to be deposited at the most central Courthouse in the district. There were some other points, as he had reason to believe, in which the Standing Orders of the two Chambers differed, and it would be just as well to bring them into harmony.

The Hon. Captain BAILLIE said there was no doubt some discrepancy existed between the Legislative Council Standing Orders and those of another place. There had been some oversight in not giving the Council notification of this alteration, and if the matter was sent to the Standing Orders Committee it might be rectified in due course.

Motion agreed to.

HAMILTON DOMAINS EMPOWERING BILL.

The Hon. Mr. McCULLOUGH, in moving, *That this Bill be now read the second time*, said a portion of land was set apart years ago as a town belt in the township of Hamilton, and a number

of allotments as an endowment. The means at the disposal of the Domain Board of Hamilton were not sufficient for them to make use of the greater part of the land so set apart. The Board had expended a sum of money upon a small portion of the land used as a recreation-ground. The whole area of the land was over two hundred acres in extent, being scattered about in sections in and surrounding the township. It was lying waste, and the Board had been unable to get any one to lease it. Therefore they proposed to take authority under this Bill to lease portions of the reserve; and, as an inducement for people to take a lease of it, they proposed to give them compensation for their improvements at the end of the term of their lease. The lease was proposed to be for a term not exceeding twenty-one years in the first instance, and for an extension not exceeding fourteen years afterwards, upon the conditions laid down in the Second Schedule of the Bill. The income from the leases would be expended upon the unleased portions of the reserve. The course proposed was found to be the only one possible under the circumstances, if this land was to be utilised in any way. The Bill had been before the Local Bills Committee, and was sent to the Council without amendment. It had been introduced into the other branch of the Legislature by the Hon. Mr. Cadman.

The Hon. Mr. JENKINSON thought the Council had repeatedly affirmed the principle that public domains or recreation-grounds were not to be built upon. The Bill at present before the Council proposed to let portions of a recreation ground. He thought the area was about 348 acres. It was giving the burgesses power to let this area for almost any purposes, and it also gave power to allow compensation to the parties to whom it was leased when the lease fell in. There was not much objection taken before the Local Bills Committee, but there was one objection which he would urge, and he would take steps to have an amendment put in in Committee. That was in reference to the word "buildings," which occurred in the schedule; and he should certainly object to that word remaining in the Bill, when it went into Committee. If they were going to let domains and recreation-grounds for the purposes of building, the purposes for which the recreation-grounds were set apart would be completely nullified. Then, they had in the schedule of the Bill the term of fourteen years. The burgesses were to be allowed to let the land for twenty-one years in the first instance, and to relet it afterwards for fourteen years. That period, he thought, was far too long for public land to be leased, especially as some of it formed the town belt. He certainly thought it should be lessened to seven or ten years at the most. He was strictly against the practice of allowing buildings to be placed on public parks or recreation-grounds. It was not long since they had in Christchurch a proposal similar to this made with regard to the park near Christchurch—that the frontages to the streets should be let on building leases.

Well, he thought the City of Christchurch had quite as much reason to ask that such a Bill should be passed as had the burgesses of the Borough of Hamilton, and if they gave such concessions to one borough they could scarcely deny it to others. He would not object to the second reading of the Bill, but would move his amendments in Committee.

The Hon. Mr. JENNINGS moved, *That the Bill be referred back to the Local Bills Committee*, as it appeared to him that sufficient evidence had not been taken to warrant the Council in passing the measure.

The Hon. Mr. McCULLOUGH said he was prepared to give any further explanation that the Council might require on the measure.

Motion, *That the Bill be referred back to the Local Bills Committee*, agreed to.

GREYMOUTH HARBOUR BOARD EM- POWERING BILL.

The Hon. Mr. KERR, in moving the second reading of this Bill, said it had been before the Local Bills Committee, and it had been ascertained that the Standing Orders had been complied with. Evidence was taken, and the Bill reported on favourably. This Bill empowered the Greymouth Harbour Board to expend money in prospecting for coal in the Westland and Nelson reserves. The Board, when constituted, was endowed with the revenues arising from these reserves in the shape of rents, royalties, and moneys obtainable from other sources. The Board was desirous that these coal reserves should be further developed, in order that its various sources of revenue might be augmented, and it therefore asked authority under this Bill to spend from time to time such portions of the revenue, as far as royalties were concerned, as the Board might receive in respect of coal. This Bill gave power to the Board to contract with the lessee, or the lessees, of any portion of the said coal reserves to pay such a subsidy towards prospecting for coal as they might think advisable; but no contract would be made whereby there should be paid to a lessee or lessees a subsidy exceeding £1 for every £1 expended by the lessees. No contract would be made until approved by the Governor in Council. The Governor in Council might also make regulations. He might state also that this Bill simply empowered the Board to expend one-half the amount of royalties collected during the preceding year. That was to say, supposing, for instance, £2,000 was collected in 1894 from royalties, only £1,000 would be expended in prospecting in 1895. The Board was anxious to properly develop these properties, so as to keep up its revenues in the future, and the power sought to be given was fenced in completely by the Government having to give its consent in all cases where expenditure was proposed. He thought there was no danger in passing the Bill and granting this power to improve and develop the properties which formed part of the endowment of the Greymouth Harbour Board. He therefore begged to move, *That the Bill be now read the second time.*

Hon. Mr. Jenkinson

The Hon. Mr. ORMOND said the Council should be informed whether the Government approved of this matter. These revenues, which it was proposed to give the Greymouth Harbour Board power to deal with otherwise than was originally contemplated, were given to that Board for the purpose of providing interest on loans. Therefore the Council should know from the Government whether they were approving of this measure, and how far it interfered with their security.

The Hon. Mr. SHRIMSKI said they ought also to know whether the revenue derived from royalties, or otherwise, was sufficient to enable the Board to lay by a certain sum of money to meet any emergencies. It seemed to him they had no information as to the amount of royalty paid to, or the income of, the Board, or what amount was likely to be granted in aid of the object they had in view. And then the question arose whether it might not be hereafter said that by agreeing to this measure they had allowed a certain portion of the revenue of the local body to be diverted for other purposes, and so pressure be brought to bear upon the Crown to make up any deficiency. If they allowed a portion of the revenue of the Greymouth Harbour Board to be used for the purpose of enabling them to carry out the object in view, it was a question whether the Crown would not be called upon to make up the deficiency.

The Hon. Mr. JENKINSON said that, as one of the Committee which had had this Bill under consideration, he was not disposed to object to it, as the prosperity of the district depended upon its coal industry. It appeared to him, however, that the practical effect of the Bill would be to allow a public body to use State money for the purpose of enabling a private company to develop the coal-mines of the district. Now, he did not think he ought to neglect such a chance of bringing the matter of nationalisation of the coal-mines before the Council. It appeared that the Greymouth Harbour Board—or rather the Grey Valley Coal Company, he thought it was—having met with some faults in their coalfields, wished for assistance from the public body, and this Bill was to give power to the public body to expend in that direction part of the amount they received from royalties—which was 6d. a ton—and other sources of revenue. He thought the royalties, haulage-fees, and the wharfrage revenue of the Greymouth Harbour Board for several years past had amounted to about £3,000. So, in reality, they were asked to give the Greymouth Harbour Board power to spend from £1,500 to £2,000 of their revenue to assist a private company to develop coal-mining. Now, it was said that a good landlord should never be averse from helping a tenant where the object of the tenant was to improve the ground; but, if anybody wished to convince him that the taking of thousands of tons of coal out of a coal reserve was improving that reserve, he certainly thought it would take a very great deal of argument to convince him that such was the fact. He thought this

was a retrograde step to take, but in this particular case he offered no objection to the Bill. It pointed, however, to the fact that the sooner the coal-mines of New Zealand were nationalised the better it would be. If the State was to afford help to private companies to develop these coal-mines, why should not the State take the whole matter of the coal-mines into its own hands and expend its own moneys there?

The Hon. Mr. BONAR said there was no doubt a great deal in what the Hon. Mr. Jenkinson had said. At the same time, it must be borne in mind that the facts were simply these: that the railway between Brunner and Greymouth was one of the best-paying lines in the colony, and he felt assured that, if no help were afforded in the direction of developing the coal-mines in that district, it would lead to the abandonment of the coal-mines by the present companies. He believed it was intended to try to get a co-operative company to undertake some prospecting in that district, and thus to augment the output of coal. It was true that the revenues of the Greymouth Harbour Board were pledged to the colony, the colony having guaranteed the payment of its loans, and, if the Board had not sufficient revenue to meet its engagements, the colony would have to find the money itself. The question, therefore, was, whether it was not better to afford assistance for the development of the coal-mining industry in the way indicated. He thought that a proportion of the royalties should be expended in the prospecting of new ground, which required additional capital, which the co-operative men were not able to find themselves. This Bill simply empowered the Harbour Board to give such assistance as they thought proper, in order to keep up their revenue so as to be able to bear the burdens thrown upon them. It was a most legitimate object, and one, he thought, that should be encouraged. That was practically, in a very few words, the real position. If no encouragement were given to prospecting, then the result might be, as he said, that, with the heavy expense which had grown up in connection with the Port of Greymouth, if the Harbour Board could not find the money that was required to meet its engagements, the colony would have to stand the racket of it. By giving the Harbour Board power to offer some little encouragement to co-operative parties to open up good ground which was known to exist, the revenue would be maintained, and the colony relieved. Therefore, as it was a comparatively small amount, and would save the colony from further expenditure, he thought the Bill might be allowed to pass.

The Hon. Mr. RIGG quite agreed with the Hon. Mr. Jenkinson that it was most desirable that the coal-mines in the colony should be nationalised. Of course, there were very great difficulties in the way; it would be an expensive operation at the present time; still, he thought it might be brought about if the Government were disposed to make a small start now, and this he thought would be best done

in the way he would suggest. Some time ago he put a question on the Order Paper asking the Government to consider the advisability of employing the "Stella" to carry coal when required for the use of the Government institutions throughout the colony.

An Hon. MEMBER.—The "Stella"?

The Hon. Mr. RIGG said, the "Stella," and he was told the vessel was unsuited for the purpose. He then had in his mind the ultimate nationalisation and utilisation of the coal-measures of the colony. He had thought it might be possible also to utilise the "Teranora," by removing the cable-tanks and using her for the same purpose. But, even supposing the vessels in the possession of the Government were not suitable for the purpose, he thought it was most desirable that they should obtain vessels suitable for carrying coal. Then, they had in their possession certain coal-measures that had not yet been leased. They might expend a certain amount of money in working these coal-measures on the co-operative principle, and so, in the first instance, supply themselves. He thought if they went so far there would not be much exception taken to it. Ultimately it might lead to that state which the Hon. Mr. Jenkinson thought was desirable, and with which he agreed. As regarded the measure now before the Council, he saw nothing to object to in it, and proposed to give it, therefore, his support, because he thought, until the time came when they might do something in the wise and comprehensive way mentioned, it was desirable they should do all they could to encourage private enterprise in that direction,—any private enterprise that would tend to the development of the resources of the colony.

The Hon. Mr. KERR wished to say just a few words, in reply, with reference to the question before the Council. The object of the Harbour Board was to advance its interests in the coal-measures in that part of the colony. It was under heavy liabilities, and it was with the desire to provide in the future for meeting its engagements that it now asked power to spend some money in the improvement and development of its own property, in order that it might be able to pay sinking fund and interest on the loans it had already obtained. The desire was altogether in favour of what his honourable friend had indicated. The endowments were very considerable. It had been mentioned that some £3,000 of revenue was derived from all sources in connection with this Board, but the revenue derived by the Board from all sources was somewhere about £14,000 per annum. The royalties amounted to about £2,500 or £3,000 last year, the supply of coal having fallen off considerably, and that was what had made the Board anxious to improve the output. They were afraid that unless they prospected for further coal-measures there would be a greater falling-off in the future; therefore they came before the Council and asked for power to enable the Board to expend some little proportion of the royalties derived

from the coal in prospecting for fresh coal-measures.

Bill read the second time.

DUNEDIN LOAN CONVERSION BILL.

The Hon. Mr. OLIVER said this Bill had been promoted by the Corporation of the City of Dunedin for the purpose of permitting it to convert certain of its loans, and thereby to effect a saving of interest to a considerable amount. The necessity for doing this had arisen in the last few years from a lessened income, owing to a lessened rating valuation. The town had lost from that source during the last ten years about £2,000 a year, and there were other sources of loss which lessened the revenue, as, for instance, the increased amount the town had to contribute towards charitable aid. Ten years ago the amount it was called upon to find for that purpose was only £450 a year, while it was now called upon to find nearly £3,000 a year. And the late licensing elections lost the town £1,800 in license fees; and the lessened rating on hotel property still further reduced the income. The expenditure at present exceeded the revenue by £5,000 or £6,000 a year, and the only course open to them, except the one now proposed, was to increase the rating to the extent of 6d. or 9d. in the pound. Before resorting to that they cast about for means, and their attention was naturally called to the fact that on some of their loans, which it was now sought to convert, they had to pay as high a rate of interest as 7 per cent., and on others 6 per cent.; and on some of these loans they had to find a certain amount of sinking fund. The First Schedule of the Bill would show honourable members that the amount of loans which they sought power to convert was £182,000, and that the sinking fund which had accumulated on these loans amounted to £65,000 odd. It was proposed to permit them to redeem these debentures, and to issue fresh debentures at $4\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. interest, without making provision for a sinking fund. In fact, sinking funds were now behind the times. No Ministry or local body of any kind now thought of establishing a sinking fund on loans; they apparently relied on borrowing at a less rate of interest at the due date of the debentures they had issued. And in this case the sinking fund which would be released if this Bill were passed, amounting to £65,000 odd, would permit them to pay off the overdraft at the bank, which now amounted to the maximum permitted by law—namely, £48,000; and on the transaction there would be a net annual saving of £4,979. Then, there would be the saving of bank interest on the overdraft, amounting to £2,000; so that, if they were successful in carrying out the conversion, the gain to the City of Dunedin would amount to about £7,000 yearly. He need not enter into a long description of the transaction which was proposed; it had become quite familiar to them in late years, because this plan had been adopted by several Governments, and with great success. He moved, *That the Bill be now read the second time.*

Hon. Mr. Kerr

The Hon. Mr. STEVENS said that in making a few remarks on this Bill he would make them without any intention of opposing the Bill, but more in the way of suggestion, and to some extent in the way of criticism. He would call his honourable friend's attention to the fact that it would be necessary, probably, to connect the Bill in some manner, as it was not at present, with the Municipal Corporations Act, so that it should read with that Act. That point was likely to arise in connection with the position of a Receiver, in case such an unfortunate contingency should arise as that of a Receiver having to be appointed. The whole machinery for the action of a Receiver was contained in the Municipal Corporations Act, and it was very desirable that that should be connected in some way with the Bill. As his honourable friend had said, the apparent principal object was to effect a saving of interest by a conversion of loans, and the fact was a rather interesting one, because he was not aware that any municipal loans had ever been converted before. He thought this was the first step in that direction. On the face of it, he saw no reason why the conversion should not take place. It was possible that the intention to take the sinking funds which would be released by the operation had been suggested by the example set by this colony in the Consolidated Stock Act, which, as they knew, had resulted in some very remarkable developments in finance. Now, the proposal with regard to this sinking fund appeared to be this: to get this £65,000 released—nearly £66,000, in fact,—and to devote about £48,000 of it to pay off the bank overdraft, and to place the balance of the money in the hands of the Sinking Funds Commissioners for investment again in the new loan. To begin with, he did not understand how the Corporation had got into such a position as to have a bank overdraft of £48,000. Perhaps his honourable friend knew the position of the Corporation better than he did, but it seemed to him that that must be in excess of the statutory amount they were entitled to borrow.

The Hon. Mr. OLIVER.—No.

The Hon. Mr. STEVENS said then they had just stuck to the maximum limit, and, of course, there could be no objection on that score. He would call his honourable friend's attention to the position of sections 11 and 13. They required attention, and it was just as well that attention should be called to them now.

The Hon. Mr. OLIVER said he would mark that.

The Hon. Mr. STEVENS said there was a principle introduced into the Bill which did not appear in any other Municipal Act with which he was acquainted. If the honourable gentleman would refer to the Municipal Acts, and to the Act regulating the borrowings of local bodies, he would find there was a limit set to the amount at which the debentures could be sold. Usually the form intro-

duced was that they should not be sold at a price which would return more than a certain amount of interest to the purchaser; and that was a perfect safeguard in relation to the amount which they should pay in the way of interest. He saw there was no such provision in this Bill, and he suggested that it was a matter of sufficient importance to justify the necessity of attention being given to it so as to cure the defect. There was a point he saw here—that the sinking fund was to be charged with any expense in connection with the negotiations for the raising of the new loan, if required; and also with the payment of the difference in the value—which might be agreed upon with the holders—of the present bonds, which were to be converted, and the amount which they were to take, if they did take any, of the issue of the new loan. The whole success of this enterprise always depended upon whether the money could be raised at 4½ per cent. If it could not be, probably the Act would not be made use of. He would like to say it appeared to him very important that they should in some way limit, or at all events place such safeguards as they could against, a more or less extravagant exchange of the new denomination for any of these old high-priced ones. There might be too much eagerness, and there occasionally was, and not so very long ago, on the part of Government, to effect conversions, possibly to get the sinking funds, and the result was sometimes found to be that very extravagant premiums were paid.

The Hon. Mr. OLIVER had just one word to say in reply. He was obliged to his friend the Hon. Mr. Stevens for the suggestion he had made to connect this Bill with the Municipal Corporations Act. That would have his attention. So far as the safeguards were concerned, this matter was fully debated in Dunedin, and he thought there was no danger of any tricks being played in that way. The object in view was to effect a saving, and he did not think the Bill would be promoted if it were thought for a moment that the debentures would be sold at a price which would actually show no saving, or only a small one. There was a danger connected with placing a price without allowing some little latitude in selling the debentures. It was this: If the price were limited, the purchasers tried to get the utmost price which the Bill permitted them to get. At the same time, he acknowledged that if there was any doubt about the *bona fides* of those intrusted with such a power there should be a limitation.

Bill read the second time.

GAMING BILL.

On the motion of the Hon. Mr. MACGREGOR, the Council insisted on its amendments to this Bill; and the Hon. Mr. McLean, the Hon. Mr. Ormond, and the Hon. Mr. MacGregor were appointed Managers to draw up reasons for so insisting, and to confer with Managers appointed by the House of Representatives.

The Council adjourned at ten minutes past four o'clock p.m.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.

Friday, 31st August, 1894.

First Readings—Rotorua Leaseholders—Reciprocal Treaty with Canada—Pitone, &c., Workshops—Cattle ordered to be destroyed—Postal Notes—Kalkohe Telegraph—Hukerenui Telephone—Awamoko Post-office—Local Bodies' "Thirds" and "Fourth's"—Import Duty on Wheat—Midland Railway—New Plymouth Harbour—Orari Money-order Office—Steam Service to Queensland—Advances to Farmers and Graziers—Tairua Land—Volunteers—Charleston-Grey Valley Road—Local Bodies' "Thirds" and "Fourth's"—Government Loans to Local Bodies—"One Electorate One Representative"—Leaseholders of Reserves—Fernhill Railway—Isbister's Unsinkable Ship—Grocer, South Dunedin, imprisoned—Fencing Lines between Europeans' and Natives' Land—Death of Tawhiao—New Plymouth Harbour—Supply—Westport-Cardiff Coal Company.

Mr. SPEAKER took the chair at half-past two o'clock.

PRAYERS.

FIRST READINGS.

Hikutaia No. 1 Block Boundary Bill, Unclaimed Land Bill.

ROTORUA LEASEHOLDERS.

Mr. MITCHELSON asked the Minister of Lands,—(1.) If he has received a letter from Mr. B. S. Corbett, of Rotorua, dated the 17th April, 1894, re the anomalous position in which old leaseholders in the township were placed as compared with new leaseholders; and, if so, what action he proposes to take upon it? (2.) Is it true that Lots 10, 13, and 14, Block 36, in the same township, were sold on the 28th of December last, and since forfeited for non-fulfilment of conditions; were advertised to be sold by auction on the 7th day of June, 1894, but withdrawn from such sale and subsequently disposed of privately?

Mr. J. McKENZIE, in reply to the honourable gentleman, would say that a letter had been received from Mr. B. S. Corbett, of Rotorua, dated the 17th April, 1894, but it did not appear to him to be a letter that required any special reply. However, in connection with the sections referred to, he might say it was the case that Lots 10, 13, and 14, Block 36, in the Township of Rotorua, were sold in December last. Through some misunderstanding, however, by the purchaser, the purchase was not completed in the time specified in the conditions of sale, and that was the case not only at the auction of these three sections, but of other sections also sold at the same time in Rotorua. But the Board afterwards allowed the purchase to be completed by the purchaser paying the full amount of money he agreed to pay at the auction-sale, and so the purchase was completed.

Mr. MITCHELSON asked if they were not advertised to be sold again.

Mr. J. McKENZIE said he had given all the information he had got from the department, and he believed it to be correct, but

could not say if the sections were readvertised: possibly they might have been.

RECIPROCAL TREATY WITH CANADA.

Mr. JOYCE asked the Colonial Treasurer, If the Government has received any intimation from Canada to the effect that Mr. Clarke, who represented the Dominion at the World's Fair in Chicago, is *en route* to Australia on behalf of Canada to negotiate for a reciprocal tariff treaty with the colonies? If not, will the Government communicate with its Commissioner in Canada, and request that the Dominion Government should instruct Mr. Clarke to include New Zealand in his Australian mission?

Mr. WARD replied in the negative.

PITONE, ETC., WORKSHOPS.

Dr. NEWMAN asked the Premier, If the workshops at Pitone, Newmarket, and Hillside are to begin working full time simultaneously with that at Addington?

Mr. SEDDON said the Commissioners replied that when work was resumed at full time all the shops would be treated alike.

CATTLE ORDERED TO BE DESTROYED.

Mr. PIRANI asked the Minister of Agriculture, If he will consider the advisability of compensating any indigent person whose cattle are ordered by the Government Inspector to be destroyed? He merely wished to point out to the Minister of Agriculture that several instances had occurred in his district where the Inspector had directed that stock belonging to poor settlers were to be destroyed. They were destroyed in accordance with the instructions, with the result that private subscriptions had to be got up to replace the animals. He merely asked the Minister if some steps could not be devised to enable some compensation to be paid to settlers in cases like those, where the settlers were in indigent circumstances.

Mr. J. McKENZIE might say that section 33 of the Stock Act provided for payment of compensation for stock destroyed, except in certain cases set forth in that clause. It would be a very dangerous thing for every one who was called upon by the Veterinary Surgeon to destroy stock to have the right to claim upon the Government; but if there were any special cases which the honourable gentleman would bring before him where poor people had been compelled to destroy a cow or cows, and could not very well afford it, then he would deal with each case on its merits.

POSTAL NOTES.

Mr. LANG asked the Postmaster-General, Whether the Government will give effect to the wishes of settlers in country districts by allowing Sub-Postmasters to sell postal notes, and thereby do away with the inconvenience to settlers of having to travel a long distance to obtain postal notes when desirous of remitting small sums of money? He might say that many of the settlers in the district he represented had to go a distance of ten miles

to get postal notes, and in many cases double that distance. It, at any rate, meant the loss of a day's work. Settlers in the back country had to put up with many hardships, and this was one which might be so easily remedied that he hoped the Minister would see his way to give a favourable reply.

Mr. HOUSTON would like, before the Minister answered the question, to be permitted to ask another one—whether it was or was not a fact that a postal note had been refused to be cashed at Bellamy's.

Mr. WARD said, in reply to the honourable member who put the question, that he might state that each application of this character was treated on its merits. It would not be advisable to authorise every Postmaster to sell postal notes, as he might say in a large number of instances the convenience would not be required. In addition to that, some of the Sub-Postmasters in the colony had no idea of keeping books. It was needless to say he did not make this statement in any disrespectful way, but it was a fact that there were some post-offices where they could not expect accounts to be kept, and where those accounts could not be kept. If there was any case that the honourable gentleman knew of where the issue of postal notes would be of service, and he brought it under his notice, he would be glad to consider it, and to consider it favourably whenever possible, as it was desired that these postal notes should be placed within the reach of everybody who wanted them. In connection with the question that his honourable friend the member for the Bay of Islands had asked, as to whether a Government postal note had been refused to be cashed in Bellamy's, he might say that there were no postal notes which were exchangeable except between the person who issued them and the person in whose favour they were issued, and that there would be none until the 1st October. There had been no postal notes issued yet which could be exchanged to anybody. He took it that the statement was made as a joke, because at present none of the Government postal notes issued in the colony were payable to any one except to the payee. He thought that probably it was a very excellent thought upon the part of some Press representative in order to have a good joke; but there was really nothing else in it.

KAIKOHE TELEGRAPH.

Mr. HOUSTON asked the Postmaster-General, If he will establish a telegraph-station at Kaikōhe? The district of Kaikōhe was an important district, the centre of a very large amount of business. At the present time there was a telephone-station there, kept by a local storekeeper. There were several other large storekeepers carrying on trade in the township, and those engaged in trade thought it would be advisable to have the telephone separate from the store. He hoped the Minister would give him a favourable reply.

Mr. WARD might inform the

Mr. J. McKensie

a telephone-station at Kaikohe, which was to be removed from the store to a private house, and placed in charge of the lineman and his wife.

HUKERENUI TELEPHONE.

Mr. HOUSTON asked the Postmaster-General, If he will establish a telephone at Hukerenui? He was led to put this question on the Order Paper through having received a communication from a large number of settlers in the district asking that a telephone-station should be established at Hukerenui. He understood the main line passed within a mile and a half of this place. The district was settled by a large population, and, owing to the difficulty of travelling this road during the winter months, the settlers there were shut out from the rest of the population. He hoped, therefore, the Minister would give him a favourable reply.

Mr. WARD might say that he would be very glad to give instructions to have the telephone-line taken to Hukerenui if a contribution was made of £54. The line would cost £170 to erect, and the income from it would be £10 per annum.

AWAMOKO POST-OFFICE.

Major STEWARD asked the Postmaster-General, Whether there is any ground for the rumour locally circulated that it is intended to close the Awamoko Post-office, and, if so, whether, in view of the great inconvenience which would thereby be caused to a large number of settlers in that part of the Oamaru district, he will be prepared to continue this old-established office? Since he put the question on the Order Paper he had received from the department an answer in writing which he thought went to show that the impression created in the district was an incorrect one. However, he would ask the honourable gentleman to answer the question in the House, in order that those interested in the matter might read it in *Hansard*.

Mr. WARD might say there was no intention whatever to change the post-office, and it had not even been contemplated to do so.

LOCAL BODIES' "THIRDS" AND "FOURTHS."

Mr. G. HUTCHISON asked the Minister of Lands, If he will give directions to the Commissioners of Crown Lands to include in the computations as to "thirds" and "fourths" the amounts retained by the Crown in respect of survey-fees for selected unsurveyed land? In the Land District of Wellington, if not elsewhere, the local bodies were refused payment of thirds and fourths in respect of unsurveyed lands. The cost of survey was required to be deposited in the first instance by a selector for the purpose of having the land selected by him surveyed, and afterwards remitted by being set against subsequent instalments of rent or other payments to the Crown. The section of the Land Act which dealt with this question was section 126:—

"For or towards the construction or maintenance of roads and bridges leading to or opening up the land in any district disposed of under this Act, or under any Act heretofore in force, there shall be handed over to the local authority having the control of roads in such district one-third of the price or value of the periodical payments and rental of all land disposed of on deferred payments under any Act, or on perpetual lease under any Act repealed by this Act, or on a lease in perpetuity under this Act, or under section eight of Appendix C of 'The Land Act, 1885,' or for occupation with right of purchase under this Act, and one-fourth of the rent of every grazing-run leased under Part V. of this Act, to be expended by such local authority for the purposes aforesaid, such expenditure to be first sanctioned by the Land Board of the district as being for the benefit of the selectors from whose lands such moneys are derived. The price or value of land upon which such third or fourth is to be paid to local authorities under this section shall be deemed to be and to have been the net price or value before any addition has been made thereto under the provisions of 'The Government Loans to Local Bodies Act Amendment Act, 1891.'"

It probably was a misapprehension on the part of the officers to refuse the thirds in respect of moneys which had been deposited in the first instance by the selector. The result of it was that for two or three years—more often the longer term—the local bodies received no contribution whatever in respect of the rents or other payments from lands selected in the first instance as "unsurveyed." It was clear that if the land had been surveyed in the first instance the expense would have been borne by the Government, and, in all probability, added to the price of the land; in which case there would be no difficulty, for the money would have been included in the capital value, and the thirds or fourths of the rents or other payments been paid to the local bodies in due course. It should make no difference whatever where the money was deposited in the first instance so as to be employed by the Surveyor-General for survey, and the local bodies ought to have contributions from that money.

Mr. J. McKENZIE said the honourable gentleman had taken an entirely wrong view of this matter. No doubt he had read the Act to his own satisfaction, but there was another point of view from which to look at it, and it was this: that the whole of the fees for unsurveyed land had been paid either to the private surveyor who made the survey or to the department for that purpose. These fees paid for the survey of land did not become a portion of the land revenue, and were not paid into that revenue, and consequently there was no fund from which thirds could be paid. That was the position of the matter at present. There was no fund out of which to pay these thirds.

Mr. G. HUTCHISON asked whether under the Act the estimated cost of survey was not

deposited by the applicant with the Commissioner of Crown Lands at the time of the application.

Mr. J. MCKENZIE said that was so; but at the same time it was kept in a separate account, and the honourable gentleman could see at the Land Office that fees for unsurveyed land were kept in a separate account to pay these surveys, and could not be applied as the honourable gentleman wished.

IMPORT DUTY ON WHEAT.

Mr. BUDDO asked the Government, If, as the price of wheat held in store is now being lowered on account of wheat and flour being shipped to New Zealand from other parts, they will take into consideration the question of raising the import duty on wheat from 9d. to 1s. 8d. per 100lb., and flour from 20s. to 80s. per ton, thus allowing the farmers the usual protection from the Customs of 25 per cent. *ad valorem*; such relief to be temporary or otherwise?

Mr. WARD said this matter had been under the consideration of the Government. No decision had been arrived at, and, he might add, no decision would be arrived at until the Tariff Committee had reported to the House.

MIDLAND RAILWAY.

Captain RUSSELL asked the Minister for Public Works, If he will obtain a report from an actuary whether the £618,250, proposed to be given to the New Zealand Midland Railway Company, in terms of subsection (c) of paragraph 2 of the report of the New Zealand Midland Railway Company, will be sufficient to provide interest, at 4 per cent. per annum for fourteen years, on the sum of £1,250,000, the estimated cost of completing the railway from Patterson's Crsek to Jackson's, and, if more than sufficient, by how much; also, a report what the total cost to the colony will amount to at the end of fourteen years next ensuing after the payment of the first sum of £200,000 of 3½-per-cent. debentures? The proposal set forth in the report of the Midland Railway Company was that the colony was to pay £618,250, which it was understood would enable the company to finance in England the necessary capital to complete the railway. This sum was to pay the interest, he understood, on the £1,250,000, the estimated cost of the completion of the line, but it would require an investigation by actuaries to know whether it would more than pay interest during the fourteen years necessary for them to have the colony's guarantee. Therefore he hoped the Minister for Public Works would give such information as would place before the House the actual result of this financial operation, because there was an impression that it might amount to more than the interest that had to be paid; and it would also be interesting to know what the actual cost to the colony was in respect to the £618,250 of 3½-per-cent. debentures by the end of the fourteen years.

Mr. G. Hutchison

Mr. SEDDON said it was stated by the manager of the company that £618,250 would meet the interest on the £1,250,000 for fourteen years, and, according to the recommendation of the Committee, £200,000 only was to be lodged the first year, £200,000 the second year, and £218,000 the third year or on the completion of the work. That being the case, if it took £618,000 to pay the interest for fourteen years, then there would be an amount realised by debentures in the way recommended by the Committee. However, before the House was asked to finally decide this question, if the company accepted the recommendation, then he should be in a position to state to the House what this money would realise. This information had been before the Committee previous to its making the recommendation.

NEW PLYMOUTH HARBOUR.

Mr. E. M. SMITH asked the Colonial Treasurer,—(1) Have the New Plymouth Harbour Board submitted a financial proposal to the Government, and, if so, has the same been considered by the Cabinet, and what are the results; (2) if the said application discloses the fact that the security offered is beyond doubt, and, if accepted, would result in a saving of £4,000 a year to the colony and the Taranaki District, and give great relief to the rate-payers in the Taranaki Harbour rating district; (3) if such is the case, will the Government give the House their opinion on the said proposals, and then give honourable members an opportunity to discuss the said proposals and allow a division to be taken on this important colonial question? It had given him the greatest pleasure in life to ask this question. There was a very great principle involved in it. The reason why he asked this question he would state briefly. They had endeavoured over and over again in the last Parliament to get a settlement of this long-voiced question, and as a final effort a deputation came down from New Plymouth, and advanced certain sound, wise financial proposals to the Government. He was now waiting for the reply of the Colonial Treasurer.

Mr. WARD said this was a very important matter, as the honourable gentleman stated, and he might say that the representations that were made by the deputation had been put in writing, and were duly submitted to the Cabinet by him. He thought the matter was of such importance that he would read what the representations were, and the reply sent, so that the people of the district and the colony might understand what the views of the Government were on this important matter:—

“Wellington, 15th August, 1894.

“SIR,—I have been requested by the New Plymouth Harbour Board to bring under your consideration the financial condition of the Board, and the difficulties under which the Board, and the settlers within the rating-area of the Board, labour in consequence of the heavy liabilities they have to meet in paying interest on the loan, and providing a sufficient

harbour staff, and endeavouring to provide some money to make necessary repairs to the harbour-works in charge of the Board.

"I enclose two statements, marked 'A' and 'B' respectively. 'A' shows the state of the sinking fund in the hands of the Sinking Fund Commissioners, and 'B' the rateable value of the occupied portion of the rating-area, the rate collected, and the land revenue from 1887 to 30th June, 1894.

"From paper 'A' you will see that there is a sum of £30,146 14s. 11d. in the hands of the Sinking Fund Commissioners, or due to them by the Board for interest on the bonds held by the Commissioners, and the Board has in its Trust Account, for the payment of interest, the sum of £6,573 2s., which will be increased by the sum of £1,500 before 1st November, making a total of £8,073 2s. to meet the sum of £6,000 due on the 1st May, and the balance will be remitted on account towards interest due on 1st November, which will make an estimated default of £4,000 on 1st November. As the Board was at one period two years' interest in arrear, you will see that the revenue has rapidly increased to enable it not only to pay current interest, but also to nearly pay off all arrears. This has been done at the cost of great sacrifices by the settlers rated, and also at great cost to the harbour-works, as the Board was obliged to unduly reduce the staff and put off much-needed repairs to the breakwater until the financial position improved; and, in fact, had to appeal to the public for subscriptions in order to avert a danger that threatened extensive damage to the breakwater.

"You will thus see that, so far as paying interest on loan, the revenue of the Board is sufficient to meet it, but then is not sufficient after paying 6 per cent. to sufficiently provide for staff, dredging, and repairs in the shape of a rock-apron to protect the sea-face of the breakwater.

"The Board therefore appeal to the Government to assist them to reduce the annual charge on interest account, either by guaranteeing a loan for, say, £172,000 at 4 per cent., to enable to convert the 6-per-cent. bonds, or, with the consent of the House of Representatives, to lend Government trust funds to effect the same operation—that is, that the Government purchase the bonds not in the hands of the Sinking Fund Commissioners, amounting to about £172,000.

"The Board is of opinion that these bonds can be purchased for that sum, but if it is found that the holders will not part with them for that sum the sinking fund might be utilised to make up the difference. The Board is advised that the holders would take 4-per-cent. Government bonds in exchange at par; it may therefore be assumed that they would

also take cash. If, therefore, the Government agreed to this course, and charged the Board 4 per cent., the relief would be great, as the Board would also be relieved of the cost of remitting money, and the result would be a relief to the ratepayers, and would enable the Board to properly carry out its functions.

"You will find by reference to paper 'B' that the Government will incur no risk in lending trust funds for this purpose. The rateable value of the occupied rating-area has increased from £1,355,092 in 1886 to £2,336,556 in 1891, and the next valuation will increase this last sum by 25 per cent. In addition to this, the land revenue for the first half of the year is £3,944. With such ample security, I venture to hope that the Government will afford relief to the settlers of Taranaki, who have made great sacrifices to pay their liabilities.

"I shall be very happy to afford you any further detail information that is in my power to give.—I have, &c.,

"R. Cock, Chairman,

"New Plymouth Harbour Board.

"The Hon. J. G. Ward, Colonial Treasurer."

"A.

"Sinking Fund Commissioners' Account.

"Office of the New Plymouth Harbour Board,

"Brougham Street, 11th August, 1894.

	£	s.	d.
Face-value of bonds held ..	28,050	0	0
Cash in Bank of New Zealand ..	413	14	11
1st May, 1894, coupons owing ..	841	10	0
1st November, 1894, coupons when due ..	841	10	0
	£30,146	14	11

* Trust Account in hand .. £6,573 2 0

"C. RENNELL, Secretary."

* This will pay the May, 1894, coupons in full, and costs of remitting to London.

"B.

"New Plymouth Harbour Board. — Memorandum for Chairman.

	Rateable Value, New Plymouth Harbour Rating District.	Rate produced.
	£	£ s. d.
Valuation roll, 1886 ..	1,355,092	4,234 13 8*
Valuation roll, 1889 ..	1,997,320	6,241 12 6*
Valuation roll, 1891 ..	2,336,556	7,301 14 9†

* Including Crown and Native lands rates.

† Without Crown and Native lands rates (since withdrawn).

"Land Revenue.

Year.	Rates collected.			March Quarter.			June Quarter.			September Quarter.			December Quarter.			Totals.		
	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.
1887	2,759	7	2	1,498	13	9	451	4	0	1,288	10	4	810	9	9	4,048	17	10
1888	7,485	4	8*	1,675	16	5	520	15	11	994	13	5	640	5	3	3,831	11	0
1889	7,285	12	2†	995	12	10	406	14	10	1,381	6	8	397	0	11	3,180	15	3
1890	5,129	9	6	989	16	6	767	14	9	1,074	12	6	894	4	8	3,726	8	5
1891	5,912	19	8‡	1,237	19	8	1,179	1	10	1,776	18	9	1,124	7	7	5,318	7	10
1892	6,202	14	6	2,196	15	1	1,213	3	11	2,591	1	7	1,179	4	0	7,180	4	7
1893	7,078	1	6	1,943	18	9	853	19	4	2,136	19	10	1,432	13	4	6,367	11	3
1894	..	..	..	2,600	14	7	1,343	6	7	..	..	..	..	..	..	3,944	1	2
..	..	..	..	18,109	7	7	6,736	1	2	11,244	3	1	6,478	5	6	37,597	17	4

* Including £3,230 18s. 5d., Crown and Native lands rates. † Including £2,200, Crown and Native lands rates. ‡ Including £746 18s. 4d., Crown and Native lands rates.

"19th August, 1894."

"C. RENNELL,
Secretary, New Plymouth Harbour Board.

After consideration, the following reply was sent to the New Plymouth Harbour Board:—

"SIR,—I have the honour, by direction of the Colonial Treasurer, to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 15th instant, representing the financial difficulties under which your Board is labouring, and applying to the Government to assist them to reduce the annual charge for interest, either by guaranteeing a 4-per-cent. conversion loan, or by lending trust funds to effect the same operation, purchasing the outstanding bonds not held by the Sinking Fund Commissioners.

"In reply I am to inform you that your representations have been carefully considered by the Government, who, it must be remembered, are placed in a very responsible position in connection with local authorities who ask for assistance, inasmuch as it is manifestly impossible for the Government to take upon itself the enormous existing liabilities of many kindred Boards, and it would be invidious to assist any particular body while refusing assistance to other bodies having equally strong claims upon the Government.

"While, therefore, fully recognising the earnest endeavours made by your Board to provide remittances of interest for the London bondholders, the Government regret they cannot see their way to give effect to the proposals of the New Plymouth Harbour Board.—I have, &c.,

"JAS. B. HEYWOOD,

"Secretary to the Treasurer.

"The Chairman, New Plymouth Harbour Board."

That was the position, and, as represented to the honourable gentleman and the deputation that had waited on the Government, the matter had been carefully considered, but the responsibilities were so great that the decision conveyed to the New Plymouth Harbour Board must be accepted as the final decision of the Government upon the matter. The honourable member, if he wished to receive that redress which he asked for, could submit such private legislation

Mr. Ward

as he might deem essential in the interests of the district.

ORARI MONEY-ORDER OFFICE.

Mr. MASLIN asked the Postmaster-General, If he will open a money-order office at Orari? He said that in the interests of the settlers an office was necessary at this place, as there was a good deal of business passing through the post-office at present, and the settlers had to go to Temuka or Geraldine. There was a trustworthy man in charge of the office at Orari, who could attend to the work without additional expense. He hoped that the Postmaster-General would see his way to grant the concession to the settlers.

Mr. WARD said inquiries were being made, and, if the amount of business was found to be sufficient, the office would be opened. He would communicate with the honourable member later on, and let him know as soon as he could.

STEAM SERVICE TO QUEENSLAND.

Mr. G. J. SMITH asked, Whether the Government will cause inquiries to be made as to the amount of trade likely to result if a direct steamer service with Queensland is established, and, if there is a reasonable prospect of such a trade being established, will the Government ask the House to grant some assistance by way of subsidy?

Mr. WARD said the shipping trade between New Zealand and Queensland was as follows: Imports, 1893, from Queensland, £91,415, and exports to Queensland, £28,316 for the same period. The trade between the two colonies was very small, and he did not think it was sufficient to warrant this colony in giving a subsidy for the purpose mentioned.

ADVANCES TO FARMERS AND GRAZIER.

Mr. HOGG asked the Government, Assuming that the scheme outlined in the Financial Statement for providing farmers and graziers

with advances at a reasonable rate of interest receives the support of Parliament, how long it is likely to be before money is available for the borrowers? This question had been asked him repeatedly by settlers in his district. It was one of great importance to the settlers generally, and he had placed it on the Order Paper in order that the reply might be given the utmost publicity. Thanks to the Minister of Lands, settlement was going on vigorously, but owing to the dense bush, wet seasons, and the want of roads the process was one of very great difficulty. Owing to the want of capital not a few of the settlers were in the position of seamen clinging to a raft, and cheap money was the vessel that was likely to get them out of their difficulties. The question was, when they were likely to get it. At the present time the bushfelling season was in full swing, and if the Colonial Treasurer were able to give a satisfactory answer he believed it would put new life into many of the settlers.

Mr. WARD said that as soon as the Bill was through the House he thought it would be found that it contained the machinery necessary to enable the money to be raised without delay, and, in the cases named, the Lending Board would be able to deal with them. He was afraid, however, that at the rate the business was progressing in the House it would probably be a very long time before that Bill was through.

TAIRUA LAND.

Mr. MCGOWAN asked the Government, What steps, if any, they propose taking to acquire the right to mine over land at Tairua, where gold has been discovered by Gordon and others?

Mr. CADMAN said that for some time the Government had been anxious to acquire all the mineral rights in the Tairua district; but, so far, it had been found very difficult to carry on the negotiations, owing to the very strong feeling in the Thames district when any attempt was made to deal with the Kauri Timber Company. Correspondence had been going on with this company for some time, and, if a satisfactory agreement were arrived at, he hoped the Thames people would not raise any further opposition.

VOLUNTEERS.

Major HARRIS asked the Government,—(1.) If they will amend the Volunteer Regulations, paragraph 119, which now requires two-thirds of a corps to be present to count a parade towards capitation? (2.) If they will allow officers commanding companies to divide the capitation-grant amongst Volunteers, as payment for each parade attended? (3.) If they will make a daily allowance to cavalry and mounted rifle corps of 2s. 6d. per man, and 1s. 6d. per horse, while out for training? (4.) If they are aware that some mounted rifle corps have no proper means of carrying their rifles and ammunition? (5.) If they contemplate arming mounted corps with the Martini-Henry rifle? If so, when?

Mr. SEDDON said that questions 1, 2, 3, and 4 were under consideration. New regulations were being drafted, and would be referred to the Military Adviser of the Government for his report. As soon as practicable the Government would get the Martini-Henry rifles.

CHARLESTON-GREY VALLEY ROAD.

Mr. O'REGAN asked the Minister of Mines, If it is true that Mr. McKay, Government Geologist, has been instructed to make an official visit to the west coast of the South Island? If so, will the Government further instruct Mr. McKay to report on the practicability of the proposed road over the Paparoa Ranges from Charleston to the Grey Valley, concerning which three largely-signed petitions have been presented to this House? As stated, three numerous-signed petitions had been presented to the House from the residents in the district concerned praying for a road between Charleston and Reefton, over the Paparoa Ranges. It was necessary to put beyond the possibility of doubt the question whether or not it was practicable to make a road over these ranges, and, as he understood that Mr. McKay was now making an official visit to the West Coast, he hoped the Minister of Mines would see his way to instruct him to report whether or not the road was practicable.

Mr. CADMAN said it was quite true that Mr. McKay had been instructed to make an official visit to the West Coast, but his services were required for geological purposes only, and they could hardly consider him qualified to report upon a matter of this kind. A report upon this road had been made some years ago by the Public Works Department, which stated the road was practicable, but would be very expensive to construct. As Mr. McKay would be in the district, he would ask him for his opinion.

Mr. GUINNESS asked why Mr. McKay was going to the district.

Mr. CADMAN.—For geological purposes.

LOCAL BODIES' "THIRDS" AND "FOURTHS."

Mr. G. HUTCHISON asked the Minister of Lands, When the return ordered on the 8rd of July, as to amounts to the credit, on the 31st March, 1894, of local bodies for "thirds" and "fourths," may be expected to be laid on the table of the House? The subject was one of very great interest to a large number of local bodies throughout the colony, and it was very desirable that this return should be made available, as it might be necessary to ask some further questions on the information it contained.

Mr. J. MCKENZIE said that the information required to complete this return had to be received from the various district officers. Some delay had been caused in getting the returns from these officers, but he hoped to be able to lay it on the table of the House in a few days.

GOVERNMENT LOANS TO LOCAL BODIES.

Mr. G. HUTCHISON asked the Minister of Lands, When the return ordered on the 25th July, as to amounts raised and expended under "The Government Loans to Local Bodies Act Amendment Act, 1891," may be expected to be laid on the table of the House?

Mr. J. MCKENZIE said this return was in course of preparation, and would be laid upon the table of the House in a few days.

"ONE ELECTORATE ONE REPRESENTATIVE."

Mr. MILLS, in the absence of Mr. Lawry, asked the Premier, If the Government will during the existence of the present Parliament introduce a Bill to repeal section 5 of "The Representation Act, 1889," and by so doing provide for "one electorate one representative"? He would like to have the full reply of the Minister, because there was a very strong feeling at present that such a Bill was wanted, and if the Government could see their way to introduce a Bill of the kind it would give great satisfaction.

Mr. SEDDON said an opportunity would be given to the House to consider this question. He believed, himself, the one-man-one-vote principle would not be complete so long as they had triple electorates.

LEASEHOLDERS OF RESERVES.

Mr. McGUIRE asked the Minister of Lands, If it is his intention to introduce legislation this session with the object of placing leaseholders of educational and other reserves on the same footing as leaseholders of Crown land? He had been induced to put this question on account of the great disadvantage the leaseholders under the Education Boards suffered. They could not get rid of their leases under the present oppressive conditions unless they took advantage of the Bankruptcy Act. And they could not get redress from the School Commissioners. Their rents were in many cases impossible rents to pay. The Minister of Lands had been good enough last year to introduce a Bill which, for some reason, was not proceeded with. He would like to know whether the Government intended to introduce legislation this session in this direction, as the leaseholders in question were suffering under a grievance which it was the duty of the House and the Government to redress.

Mr. J. MCKENZIE said it was quite true that he had introduced a Bill dealing with this subject last session, but it had been withdrawn because there was no possibility of getting it passed. He had now under consideration a Bill which he hoped would meet with the approval of the House. He hoped to introduce it in a few days.

FERNHILL RAILWAY.

3.30. Mr. MILLAR asked the Minister for Public Works,—(1.) What amount of money has been expended by the Railway Commissioners upon the Fernhill Railway

since it came into their hands? (2.) Before the line is vested in the equitable owners, will any amounts so expended have to be refunded by them?

Mr. SEDDON said that a memorandum received from the Railway Commissioners, dated the 27th instant, stated that the total amount expended by the Commissioners on this line was £707 11s. 10d. The Commissioners stated that, as the revenue derived from the line was considerably less than the cost of working it, they could not see that any amount could be allowed for the use of the line during the time they had it.

ISBISTER'S UNSINKABLE SHIP.

Mr. MILLAR asked the Premier,—(1) If he is aware that in 1884 a model of an unsinkable ship was sent up to this House by Mr. William Isbister, of Port Chalmers; (2) that the said William Isbister has never since that time seen his model, although continual application has been made by him for it; (3) if the model cannot be found and returned to the owner, will the Premier place a small sum on the estimates as compensation for the loss thereof? He had been asked by the proprietor of this model to make inquiries about it. It appeared that the model was sent to the House in 1884, and the owner had endeavoured by every means to find some trace of it since that time. Last mail a letter was received from the Agent-General stating that he had not seen it. The model was 13ft. long, and it had been seen by honourable members in the lobby of the House. No trace of the model could be found, and the owner desired him to ask the House whether, if the model could not be found, they would give some compensation for the loss of it.

Mr. SEDDON said the model was in the hands of the Lands and Survey Department, and it could be had on application. He might say that in case anything happened to it it had been photographed.

GROGER, SOUTH DUNEDIN, IM-PRISONED.

Mr. W. HUTCHISON asked the Minister of Justice, If he can explain how it came to pass that a grocer in South Dunedin, failing to pay a fine, was sent to gaol the other day, treated as a common criminal, and set to work in prison clothes along with these criminals?

Mr. CADMAN said this was one of several cases heard by Mr. Carew, Stipendiary Magistrate, at Dunedin in April last; and the best reply he could give to the honourable gentleman would be to read the report of the Magistrate on the matter:—

"Referring to your telegram of 25th August, 1894, I have the honour to state that Alfred James Larking, grocer, of South Dunedin, was charged, on the 26th April, 1894, on information by the Inspector of Weights and Measures, with selling, as unadulterated, a certain drug—to wit, cream of tartar—which, in fact, was adulterated. Mr. A. J. Fraser appeared for the defendant and pleaded Guilty; whereupon I sentenced him to pay a fine of £1 and the

costs, which came to £2 8s. The charge was brought under the latter portion of section 5, 'Adulteration Prevention Act, 1880,' which makes no provision for imprisonment in case of default. Therefore I made no order for imprisonment, nor had I the power to do so, the enforcement of payment having to be left to the general provisions in such cases, under sections 91 to 97 of 'The Justices of the Peace Act, 1882.' My connection with the case ended here, but Mr. Ralfe informs me that, as defendant did not pay, he first caused a notice to be served upon him demanding payment, and subsequently caused Sergeant Brown to call upon defendant on several occasions to point out to him the consequences that must follow if he did not pay the money. As these cautions had no effect, Mr. Alexander Thomson, a Justice of the Peace, who was at the office of the Police Court on the 9th June, issued a warrant of distress to recover the fine and costs, and, as the amount was not recovered, the same Justice, on the 20th July, 1894, issued a warrant of commitment in default of distress, and fixed the term of imprisonment at seven days' hard labour, which would have ceased at any time on payment of the fine and costs. The proceedings appear to have been regular in every respect excepting that there was unusual delay in issuing the warrant of imprisonment. Mr. Gaoler Phillips informs me that Larking was brought to the gaol about 4th August, was put into prison-clothes as a hard-labour prisoner in accordance with the prison regulations, but, instead of putting him to work with the ordinary prisoners, to which he was liable, he was set to work by himself in his cell in cleaning oakum, which had been already picked, and is light work."

FENCING LINES BETWEEN EUROPEANS' AND NATIVES' LAND.

Mr. HOGG asked the Government, Whether, in connection with Native-land legislation, they propose to make provision for enabling settlers whose properties are bounded by Native lands to enter upon the latter for the purpose of felling a fencing-line? Some settlers in the Hokianga County, up North, had written to him complaining that they were unable to go on with their improvements, or to fence their land, on account of being surrounded by Native property. They had written to the Native Minister, asking whether he could authorise them to go upon the Native land for the purpose of clearing about half a chain in width, and the reply that they had received from the Minister of Justice was that he was unable to advise them on the subject.

Mr. SEDDON said this was a very large question, and it had received the attention of the Government: in fact, it was under consideration now. He could not say whether the Government would bring in a Fencing Bill; but he thought the honourable member for Otaki had brought the matter up last session. At all events, it was a subject which was under consideration.

DEATH OF TAWHIAO.

Major HARRIS said there was a vessel leaving for Auckland that evening, and, as one of the members was proceeding to Auckland by that vessel, he would like to ask whether the honourable member for the Bay of Plenty had been appointed by the Government to represent them, and assist at the *tangi* to be held over the remains of Tawhiao. This was a fitting opportunity for doing so, if the Government wished to be represented at the ceremony.

Mr. SEDDON said the Government had made prior arrangements for being represented by a Government officer in the Waikato. He hoped the honourable member for the Bay of Plenty would not feel offended that he had not been appointed to represent the Government, for he was not aware that the honourable gentleman was going to the *tangi*.

NEW PLYMOUTH HARBOUR.

On the question, That the House go into Committee of Supply,

Mr. E. M. SMITH moved the following resolution: That the time has come, after what has fallen from the Colonial Treasurer, that this House shall take up the financial position of the New Plymouth Harbour Board, and grant them relief. He was very proud to bring this matter before that honourable House. He had to thank the Colonial Treasurer for the courteous manner in which he had met the case; but, at the same time, the honourable gentleman had not given to the House the information which it ought to have. What was the position as disclosed by the statement of the Colonial Treasurer? It was time that this question was taken up by the House, and dealt with finally. He understood from the reply that had been given by the Colonial Treasurer as to the result of the deliberations of the Government that they had come to a very ridiculous conclusion. They recognised that the Board had a just claim, and that they should get redress. It could not be denied that the proposal which had been made would save £4,000 a year to the colony, and it could not be denied that it would give great relief to the settlers of Taranaki. That district borrowed £200,000 for the construction of their harbour. They were ready to give the Government great credit for the assistance it had rendered to them by preventing the total destruction of that expenditure. The harbour now was a great success, so far as it had gone. The Government, as he had said, had rendered the Board great assistance, but that assistance would sink into insignificance compared with the assistance they would give to over eighteen thousand rate-payers by this little bit of financial arrangement. The Treasurer did not attempt to deny that the financial proposals of the Board were sound. That they were sound there was not the shadow of a doubt. It was the bounden duty of the Government, where they could reduce taxation, and the interest paid by a large section of the community, to do so. The Government ought to have given the House the

opportunity long ago, by placing them in possession of the facts of the case. Then, they ought to devise some means whereby the House could discuss the question, and come to a division upon it, and so learn what was the opinion and temper of honourable members upon the subject. The Board was in a very peculiar position. The bondholders had offered to take 4 per cent. instead of 6 per cent., but the Board was powerless to act without the consent of the Government or Parliament. The bondholders themselves were satisfied that they were in a splendid financial position. They were two years in arrears; but the increases in their improvements, and the large amount of land that had been taken up under the wise administration of the Government land policy, were increasing year by year the security for the loan raised. The documents laid before the Government proved that they had over £2,000,000 rateable value, and at the next revaluation it would increase by 25 per cent. They had bought in about £30,000 of the debentures, and here was the stupid part of the business: that they were compelled to pay interest on the bonds held by the Trust Commissioners, and had to pay on £200,000, while they only had a debt of £170,000. If they could devise some means by which these bonds could be converted into colonial bonds it would save £9,000 a year. But the Government would not give the opportunity, and, in reply, did not state to the House whether the security that was offered them provided they lent the money at 4 per cent. was good or not. That was the reason he was moving the amendment in order that the House might be placed in possession of the facts of the case. It would be remembered that last Parliament a Select Committee was set up to go into the question; and what had they done? The Committee recommended that the question should be dealt with, but when it was brought before the House the Government did not support it, and it was lost on division. Their position had gone on improving; they were in a very different position now from what they were in then, and he was confident that the Colonial Treasurer recognised the security was ample beyond any shadow of a doubt. The Government said this: that if they gave relief to the ratepayers in the Taranaki Harbour District all the other Harbour Boards and local bodies in the country which wanted to get a reduction of interest, and redress, and justice, and relief, would come to them. What a ridiculous statement! If any local body in New Zealand could prove to the Government that they could give undoubted security, and the Government had funds at its disposal, it would be a wise thing to do to enable them to reduce interest, especially when it was for a national purpose. If it were for a merely local purpose, —for making local roads for the people of a particular district,—the case would be different. But the harbour brought in a great deal of revenue to the railway. The Government recognised that of all places in New Zealand Taranaki was the most blessed. If land was

in the market there for lease or sale, or on any terms, it was at once taken up. The other day land was gobbled up there above the upset price. There was a large amount of exports taken away—nearly three thousand tons of butter; and all the produce was increasing in proportion; and this was a question that should be dealt with by the House and the Government, and should not be shuffled off from year to year. Who had they to appeal to? Was not the House and the Government the proper tribunal? Had they not approached them with petitions and with well-defined schemes? Undisputed facts had been laid before them, and everything had been made as clear as possible. Yet the Government got out of it by telling them they ought themselves to approach the bondholders, or to join other local bodies and go in for a consolidation scheme. That was a ridiculous suggestion. What was the result of a private member's action? He had moved a resolution, and if the Government backed that up and brought the matter to a division that was all they were asked to do, and that was what they ought to do, in justice, in honour, and in fairness. They would then be able at once to see the position they were in. The Government ought to have been able to guide the House, and to tell the House whether the security was good, bad, or indifferent. If the matter were brought to a division they could see who were the Liberal members in the country—who were the members representing the industrial classes, and who were willing, when they saw how it could be done, to lift a burden amounting to £4,000 a year off the ratepayers of a particular district. They wanted to ascertain who those members were who talked at electioneering times about the reduction of taxation—about doing justice to the industrial classes. They wanted to have it on record who those gentlemen were, and to know in future how to deal with them. Any true colonist who went into the question, and took into consideration the taxes placed on these industrious people, would come to their relief. They were taxed nearly out of existence, what with charitable-aid rates, and special rates for roads. They had gone in for loans to local bodies; and there was the loss caused by the storms of last year, and a large amount of timber thrown down into the river, causing a great flood to come down. Then there was the harbour rate on the value of the land. The Government were professing to bring in a policy, in which he was backing them up, of cheap money for the people. Here was a chance to bring cheap money and reduce interest; this was a step in the right direction, and they could ascertain whether the Government were in earnest with this proposal for cheap money and reduction of interest. He believed that their policy would bring down the rates of interest. Here within their grasp, to start with, was a great national question—the reduction of interest to these settlers. The late Premier, Mr. Ballance, had said he recognised they had a claim, and had been badly treated, and he proposed to set

Mr. E. M. Smith

aside a block of land of fifty or a hundred thousand acres to compromise the matter. It was of no use for him to weary the House by going into the details. The Government had filched from them an endowment of 200,000 acres, valued at £360,000, and they had never got anything in return. By altering the system of land-tenure they had done away with cash-sales to a great extent, and gone in for the perpetual lease, and had put their revenue beyond their reach, although it was gradually coming in. He would draw attention to the fact that, with all these taxes heaped upon them, they had willingly subscribed £1,000 in case of need when it was wanted to do some repairs. These were fellow-colonists, men known to some honourable gentlemen as some of the most industrious men and small farmers in the colony, the bone-and-sinew and backbone of the colony; and they were appealing to the highest tribunal in the country—to the Government and the House of Representatives—to take the matter into their favourable consideration and grant them this small amount of redress by reducing this interest. He would be satisfied if the question were referred to four members of the Opposition to decide upon it. He did not want the local members to have anything to do with it. Let the House select any four members, and let them have twenty days, and after they had gone through the papers, and into the state of the case, if those four members reported to the House that it was not advisable to lend the trust funds or to reduce the interest on the lines proposed by the Board, they would not go on with the matter any further. But if they did—as he knew they would—report to the House that the proposals were fair, and honest, and just, and that the security would be ample, then let that settle it. It was not necessary for him to detain the House further. The honourable member for Patea knew how this was affecting a portion of his constituency, and he had something to say, which he could put in a more able manner. He hoped the Government would not prevent a division taking place, and that they would support it. But, as long as the Government would shuffle out of these national questions, what was the use of bringing the matter up? Was it not a blind-bat policy, when the bondholders were offering to do justice by reduction of interest, not to accept it?

Mr. McGUIRE regretted that this important question had been brought forward by the honourable member for New Plymouth at such an inopportune time. This was a question of vital importance, affecting as it did thousands of ratepayers within the New Plymouth Harbour Rating District, who were compelled to pay an unjust imposition in consequence of the action of the Government, who had in a most barefaced manner robbed them of a large portion of their endowments, which endowments were given to the Harbour Board by Acts passed

4.0. in this and the other branch of the Legislature. In conversations he had with the Colonial Treasurer that honourable gentleman promised that a special day would

be given for discussing this very important question. Relying on that promise, he was in hopes that no advantage would be taken of him. He was therefore surprised that the honourable member for New Plymouth should have forced the matter forward. He (Mr. McGuire) had little doubt that the honourable member was induced to do so at the earnest solicitation of the Government. It was surely time enough to bring the question up when the letter of the Chairman of the New Plymouth Harbour Board to the Colonial Secretary, and also the statement of the financial condition of the Board, was printed and in the hands of honourable members. Had the honourable gentleman waited until this was done he would have been acting in the true interests of the taxpayers, whose interests it was his clear duty to conserve. Time would not permit him (Mr. McGuire) to go fully into the question, in order that he might be able to give new members of the House the opportunity of reviewing the whole of the past history of the New Plymouth Harbour and its endowments; but, if time would have permitted, he would have liked to show the great injustice which had been done to the bondholders and settlers within the harbour rating-area. He would have been able to show that, had the securities pledged to the bondholders been left intact by Parliament, which should have upheld its own law, his constituents would not have been called upon to bear the burden of taxation that they had now to pay, and the bondholders would not, for the same reason, have been forced to suffer by interest in arrears and consequent depression of the bonds. He would call the attention of the House to an Act passed in 1874. This Act granted 25 per cent. of the proceeds of the sale or other disposal of the land in the provincial district to the Taranaki Harbour Board. Now, in the years 1880, 1881, 1882, and 1883 they took out of the endowment granted to the Harbour Board 200,000 acres for a national purpose, in the interest of the whole of the colony. He did not find fault with the Government for taking away this land in the interests of the whole colony; but he thought—as thousands of others would think with him—that, if it was necessary to take a portion of the endowment for a national purpose, just and equitable compensation should have been given to the bondholders and the ratepayers interested. Had the Government done that, instead of being in the position they found themselves in there would be lying to their credit from that source alone £100,000. He was therefore surprised that the honourable member who had just sat down, and who represented a portion of those ratepayers, should be found, in season and out of season, singing the praises of the Ministry and of the Colonial Treasurer. The favour he was asking the Government to do was one, after all, of comparative insignificance. The bill which he asked them, as it were, to indorse was small in comparison with the one indorsed by them for the Bank of New Zealand. The security he had to offer the Government was as sound and sub-

stantial as any security in the country. The Government were now paying to the Harbour Board over £6,000 a year from the 25 per cent. of the Land Fund. The country was being rapidly settled and brought into cultivation. The land was some of the best in this or the neighbouring colonies, and the area within the harbour rating district contained most of the land upon which the great New Zealand butter and cheese industry was being developed; and as the value increased the rates would also proportionately increase, and also as the unsettled area was taken up and occupied so would the security increase in value, and reduce the burden of rates by spreading it over a greater area, a greater value, and a greater number of people. When they took into consideration the great support that the honourable member for New Plymouth had always given to the Government,—on all occasions an obedient follower, ever ready to do their bidding,—it was surprising that they should hesitate to give assistance to the people whom he represented. They could, if they were in earnest, relieve the people of the extra burden they had now to bear—of £4,000 a year—on their 6-per-cent. loan; but all the satisfaction the Government gave this servile follower, in answer to his question, was that they would have nothing to do with it—that he could take it on the floor of the House, as they were not prepared to assist in any way. It would be remembered that in the first session of the last Parliament a Committee of ten members was appointed to make inquiries into the New Plymouth Harbour question. The Committee was composed of Government supporters and Opposition members; there were also Ministers and ex-Ministers upon it; and they came to the conclusion, after a careful inquiry of many weeks, that the Government should take over the assets and the liabilities, and relieve the settlers of the rates. Had they done that they would have made restitution to the ratepayers, and also to the bondholders, who had lent the money to the Harbour Board on the strength of the endowments given to the Harbour Board to pay interest on the loans. But he was sorry to say that the Government of this country did not hesitate to pay interest on the New Plymouth Harbour Loan, and keep back the letter of the Chairman of the Harbour Board notifying the bondholders that the Board was unable to meet its interest in full. At the time they did this they had a conversion scheme on the London market, and they could not afford to allow any of the local bodies to become bankrupt. To put it in the language of the Agent-General of that day, "It was not expedient to do so"; and this was wilfully done in order to hoodwink our creditors in London. As soon as they had completed their conversion they dropped the New Plymouth Harbour Board, to use a homely expression, "like a hot potato." The Harbour Board bonds stood above par, on account of the action of the Government, and afterwards fell to 66. While the Government was keeping up the security many parties had purchased New Plymouth bonds,

Mr. McGuire

and trust funds were invested for widows and orphans. The case of the widow of a distinguished officer in Her Majesty's service was worth quoting. This lady invested the little fortune left her in the New Plymouth Harbour bonds at the time the Government were "bulling" the market, and, through their action, in a few months she lost nearly half her fortune. The amount of interest to be paid annually was £12,000, being at the rate of 6 per cent. Now, what was asked of the Government was to advance £170,000 in order to buy up the bonds, and, at the same time, to reduce the rate of interest to 4 per cent., which would mean a saving to the taxpayers of nearly £4,000 per annum. It was clearly the duty of the Government to come to the assistance of the people whom they themselves unjustly oppressed, whom they had robbed of their endowment to the extent of £100,000, as the Property-tax Commissioner had valued the land at £400,000, and 25 per cent. of that amount was the property of the New Plymouth Harbour. He on many occasions in the House had brought the matter forward, and the late Colonial Treasurer, the Hon. Mr. Ballance, was always prepared to set up a Committee to inquire into the matter; but he must confess that he never was inclined to have a Committee of the House until such time as the recommendation of the first Committee was carried out. As the question was surrounded by so many Acts of Parliament, and was in many respects difficult and complex, and would therefore require more time and consideration than a Committee would be able to give it, he requested the late Colonial Treasurer repeatedly to relegate it to a Judge of the Supreme Court, to be investigated on the lines of honesty, justice, and good conscience; and, if the case went against him, he was determined never to bring it up again while he had the honour of a seat in the House. Now, the honourable member for New Plymouth had only asked the Government to do a very simple business transaction in the interest of struggling settlers—namely, to lend the Board sufficient funds to pay off the amount they had borrowed, at 4 per cent.; and, as the Treasurer himself admitted, the security was undoubted. The settlers were hard-working and industrious, and it was the duty of the Government to lighten their burden, without involving the colony in any way. The Government professed to be working in the interests of struggling settlers: here was an opportunity for them to put their professions into practice. The honourable gentleman who had asked for relief was a faithful follower of theirs, and he surely deserved a *quid pro quo* for the many valuable services he had rendered them. As regarded himself, his position in the House was an independent one. He asked for nothing but justice, and the constituency which he represented wanted nothing more. The settlers, the ratepayers, and the bondholders had suffered an outrageous injustice, an injustice which it was the duty of the Government to redress. He regretted to

see that the question asked by the honourable member for New Plymouth received so little consideration from the Government. He knew that he was speaking to deaf ears so far as the Ministry were concerned, and he would therefore conclude, because he knew it was useless to continue. He was sufficiently long in the House to know why the honourable member for New Plymouth brought up this question. He knew that no good result would come out of the present discussion, and therefore there was no need of taking up any further time of the House.

Dr. NEWMAN said, in spite of the indolent attitude of the Government on this question, he would like to say a few words regarding it. The honourable member who moved this amendment had declared the other day that the people of New Plymouth idolised the Government. He wondered that they idolised a Government that treated them in this ungenetous fashion. He thought if the Government had treated this matter with a little more consideration they really might have done something to relieve the Taranaki District. For his part, he did not believe it would be at all wise to give relief to imppecunious Harbour Boards throughout the colony, but he thought there was a way of giving relief to the Taranaki District that might very well have been adopted, and that the House would have been very happy to indorse if submitted to it. The position was this: This harbour had already had £200,000; what was owing was £172,000. They had put by about £30,000 as sinking fund, and the bonds of this Harbour Board had rarely been at a lower discount than now. If the Colonial Treasurer were to wire Home to the Agent-General to buy the bonds at the discount at which they now stood, in all probability the whole of the Taranaki Harbour bonds could be got for £160,000. Then, there was the £30,000 accumulated sinking fund. That would reduce it to £130,000, and that would be a very great relief. Further, as the colony was undoubtedly liable for the "fourths" as long as they had land sold or leased, if they were to capitalise that they would have an additional £30,000 or £40,000, which would make up a nice round sum. That would be the way, in his opinion, to reduce the debt in a most businesslike fashion. The net debt of the district would then be £100,000; and, seeing how its revenues were coming in, they could issue debentures at 5 per cent., with 1 per cent. sinking fund, and it seemed to him that Taranaki would be ample security for the £6,000, instead of the £12,000 a year interest which they had now to pay. In that way very material relief could be afforded without any risk or danger to the colony. The relief might have been given during the course of two or three months, but it would last for a considerable time, and, by insisting upon a sinking fund being attached, within forty-seven years the entire debt of the Taranaki Harbour Board would be wiped off. He should vote against the resolution, as it contained something he did not approve of; but he thought they might be

given great relief in that fashion,—by buying the debentures, and taking the sinking fund to pay off so much, and also, at the same time, by capitalising the fourths of the Land Fund. He regretted the Ministry had treated the matter so cavalierly, and must confess he did not see how the Harbour Board, as matters now stood, would be able to do anything, and the burden on the ratepayers was exceedingly heavy. But he believed there now occurred an excellent chance for the Government to relieve those settlers—to relieve not only New Plymouth, but the whole of the rating district; and, he took it, all the country subject to this rate ought not to be so gravely depreciated when, for such a small sum, such great benefits would result. He regretted that the Government had allowed this great chance to slip away. If the Government would do this, there still remained some months during which it could be done; but it could not be done, he understood, at a later period. At the rate at which these debentures were now going, they would presently rise to such a high quotation as to be at a premium, and then all relief to Taranaki would have vanished. He was sorry the Government did not follow a bold course in this matter, and give some of the relief requested by the honourable member for New Plymouth.

Mr. THOMPSON said the discussion they had had that afternoon would, he hoped, be a lesson to the Government and every member of that House who, a few evenings ago, voted for another bogus Harbour Board Bill.

Mr. O'REGAN.—Oh!

Mr. THOMPSON said the honourable member said, "Oh!" He presumed from that that he voted for that Bill. He hoped there would be no more such Bills brought in or supported by the Government or by any one else. He thought the stand taken by the Government was the proper one, and the only course which any Government could adopt; and he hoped the Taranaki Harbour Board would be allowed to work out its own salvation, and that every other Harbour Board would be allowed to work out its own salvation. It was useless to come to that House and worry members session after session, as the honourable member for New Plymouth did, and as others did. He and others, by this persistent attitude they took, and by worrying members of the Government day after day, hoped to force the House into doing something the House had no right to do. He hoped the honourable member for New Plymouth would see the error of his ways, and devote his great natural abilities to something more useful. The people of Taranaki forced this Harbour Board on to the colony, and they must take the responsibility for their action. He knew the honourable gentleman was not responsible for that. He dared say that if he had been in Parliament his superior intelligence would have enabled him to look beyond the narrow visions of the members who represented Taranaki in those days, and probably they would have had no Taranaki sandbank, which was now formed by the breakwater. He thought this discussion would

open honourable members' eyes to the utter folly of giving any countenance to these bogus harbours. And, as far as Taranaki was concerned, now the bonds had risen almost to par, the bondholders had no grievance against the colony; and why should Taranaki cry out in this fashion, seeing that the bonds stood in London at 99? Did they want the rest of the taxpayers of the colony to step in?

Mr. E. M. SMITH said that if the honourable member had been present to hear him he would not talk so ridiculously as he was now doing.

Mr. THOMPSON said the honourable gentleman's speeches were all alike; they got as much information out of one as out of another. It was always Taranaki. He knew that the Government were anxious to get into Committee of Supply, and he had no wish to keep the House; but he hoped they would have no more of this Taranaki Harbour Board—during this session at all events. They had had enough of it for one session.

Mr. G. HUTCHISON wished to say that the Government were begging the whole question, as was indicated by the paper which he might assume was laid on the table of the House that afternoon by the Colonial Treasurer. They had begged the whole question by assuming that the Taranaki Harbour Board was in the same position as other Harbour Boards in the colony—by arguing that if they granted relief in this case they would be bound to do so in other cases. The case of the Taranaki Harbour Board was perfectly singular in this respect: that it had a valuable endowment of 25 per cent. of the whole land revenue of the Taranaki Land District, which was an endowment being administered by the Government itself. That land revenue now, he was informed, amounted to a little less, and soon would amount to more, than the interest that need be payable upon the original loan of £200,000. Consequently there could be no risk to the Government in buying up the debentures at par. He did not urge, and never had urged, that the Government should go upon the market and as a speculator buy the bonds of any local body of the colony at a discount. But they should buy if they could at par value. They could have done so certainly two or three years ago, and they could probably do so now, but in a very short time it would be impossible for them to acquire the bonds at par value, because, after passing through a period of incredible hardship, the settlers had now reached a point when it was perfectly certain that the revenue from the land endowment alone would be sufficient to pay the interest. He understood his honourable friend the Colonial Treasurer admitted that it would be a perfectly safe transaction for the colony to undertake, namely, to invest £200,000 or somewhat less—for there was a sinking fund of between £20,000 and £30,000—from one or more of the lending departments of the Government, in buying up these 6-per-cent. bonds and charging—as the colony was insisting on paying for Treasury bills—4 per cent. In that way

Mr. Thompson

one-third of the interest which was payable annually by the district would be immediately extinguished, and thus give a great impetus to settlement and industry generally in that part of the colony. He could not believe, seeing that the investment was admitted to be a safe one by the Colonial Treasurer, and seeing that this was a singular instance, and not one that could be quoted as a precedent in any other instance—it was incredible that such a step should not be taken. His honourable friend the member for Marsden, like some other honourable members, had not taken the trouble to look into the present condition of the case. Let it be admitted for the sake of argument that the original loan was a mistake. The present question was: Could the position of the ratepayers of the district be relieved by the Government stepping forward and making a perfectly safe investment by which one-third of the interest might be saved, reducing the interest to a sum which would be covered by the land revenue that was passing through the hands of the Government? The honourable member for Marsden remarked that the Taranaki Harbour Board ought to be left to work out its own salvation. The Taranaki Harbour Board was perfectly prepared to do so; but if the House insisted on leaving it to itself, and giving it no assistance, then it would work out its own salvation with unnecessary tribulation. Taranaki was one of the richest districts in the whole colony, and one of the most closely settled, and it would no doubt be able in time to do without this rate. But why should the Board have to pay a third of the interest more than was necessary in working out its own salvation? Its penitential course need not be made unnecessarily harsh. He would remind the honourable member for Marsden of the instance of the two pilgrims whose penance was that they should walk to Loretto with peas in their shoes. One was philosophical enough to boil his peas, and got to the end of his journey with comparative comfort. Why should not the Taranaki Harbour Board boil down its peas? It would then reach the goal just as certainly—nay, more certainly, and much more comfortably than the other way.

Amendment negatived, and motion agreed to.

SUPPLY.

IN COMMITTEE.

CLASS VIII.—MINISTER OF EDUCATION.

Education Department: Head Office, £2,472.

Mr. MEREDITH asked how the three Inspectors were employed—namely, the Inspector-General, the Assistant Inspector, and the Organizing Inspector of Native Schools.

Captain RUSSELL asked if any change was proposed in regard to the inspection of schools, as the matter had already been before the House as to the desirability, or otherwise, of changing the system of inspection so as to have a more equal standard of efficiency throughout the whole colony.

Dr. NEWMAN desired to draw the Minis-

tar's attention to the need for "continuation" or night schools, which had been a great success in other parts of the world. He was also in favour of school-books and stationery in State schools being supplied by the State. The present system was also lacking inasmuch as cooking was not taught in the schools. A small additional grant would meet the suggestion in regard to "continuation" schools.

Mr. DUNCAN desired to draw the attention of the Minister in charge of the education vote to the disparity existing between the pay of male and female teachers. He considered it ought to be a recommendation that the salaries of the head-teachers should be curtailed, and an addition made to the pay of the female teachers and pupil-teachers. At the present time when a school fell below a certain percentage a reduction was made, and nearly all the reduction came off the female teachers and pupil-teachers, or they were dismissed.

Mr. TANNER thought attention should be called to the want of uniformity in the tuition given in the various education districts of the colony. There were, he knew, difficulties in the way: that had been shown at the meeting of the recent Conference of Inspectors; but honourable members would support the Ministers by legislation in order to remove the difficulties. The State should also supply a uniform series of school-books, not absolutely free, but they should be compiled, printed, and supplied under the supervision of the State.

Mr. J. W. KELLY also desired to refer to the great difference between the salaries paid to male and female teachers. He contended that where equal work was done by female teachers to that done by male teachers equal salaries ought to be paid.

Mr. BUTON said that a deputation had waited on the Minister in regard to the question of the uniformity of salaries and the earmarking of moneys voted by the House for salaries, so that they should be applied by the Boards to the purpose intended, and not be diverted to some other purpose. Another meeting was to be held in order to support the Minister in bringing in a Bill in that direction.

Mr. REEVES, in reply to the question which had been asked by the honourable member for Ashley as to the duties of the Inspectors, and as to what justified the Government in retaining their services, said the Inspector-General was also Secretary of the department, and that officer, the Rev. Mr. Habens, now performed the duties which had up to ten years ago been performed by two officers. He had to take charge of the whole of the Civil Service examinations. He was also in charge of the syllabus, and the schedule of school-books. All questions of regulations and disputes between teachers and Inspectors were placed before him. He had the whole charge of the administration of the Native schools, the industrial schools, and the Deaf-and-dumb Asylum; and the inspection of the Blind Asylum in Auckland. He was responsible for the inspection of the twenty-four high schools; and it was

a pity the colony could not afford to place the inspection of those high schools under a separate officer. The Inspector-General also took charge of the finance of the department, and had the distribution of the building vote. He also had to carry on a variety of correspondence with the Education Boards. He had also the compilation and arrangement of the statistics relating to education, and the preparation of the various reports that were periodically laid before Parliament, besides certain other duties, which were quite sufficient to keep an officer of the best qualifications and education fully occupied. The second Native School Inspector was also clerk in the department. The Native schools were very much scattered, from the extreme north to the extreme south of the colony, and they were in places where the means of locomotion was exceedingly slow, so that the time of both Inspectors of Native Schools was fully occupied.

Mr. MEREDITH wished to know if it was part of the duty of the Inspector-General to examine the high schools referred to, and he asked when the reports of those examinations would be laid on the table of the House.

Mr. REEVES said the report had been sent to the Printing Office some time ago, but had evidently been blocked there. He was sorry for this, because the report happened to be a very interesting one. It was not the duty of the Inspector-General to examine the schools.

Mr. MEREDITH had no fault to find with the Inspector-General, but there was great dissatisfaction in the country districts because of the insufficient provision made for the examination of those schools. There seemed to be no guarantee to the public that their children were being properly educated, or that the different endowments were being utilised in the interests of the colony.

Mr. SAUNDERS asked the Minister who examined the high schools.

Mr. REEVES said the examiners under the High School Boards were responsible for the examination. He was giving attention to the question of whether it was possible for the Government to conduct those examinations. There were, however, difficulties in the way of Government examination. For instance, if there were only two or three examiners the examinations could not be all held at the same time. Then, again, with regard to secondary education, one officer would naturally not be competent to examine in all subjects. He admitted it would be a good thing if the Education Department could take over the whole of the examinations of the secondary schools. There was no doubt that secondary education in New Zealand was not in a satisfactory state, and the most unsatisfactory point was that there were not 2 per cent. of the children who received primary education who also received a secondary education. That was a most dangerous and he thought he was not exaggerating when he said it was a terrible thing—that, in a democratic country like this, not 2 per cent. of the children received secondary education. University education was a

very desirable thing; but it should be regarded as a necessity that the more intelligent children should get a secondary education in larger numbers than at present. He hoped to be able to deal with secondary education next session; and he was exceedingly glad to see the House in such a temper in reference to that question.

Mr. THOMPSON said they had had a secondary school at Whangarei for some years, which had been doing very well. The settlers had done their best to make it self-supporting. He had asked for a small grant to put up a school-building, the present building being unfit for the purpose of a school. The Minister had replied that they had not any money for secondary-school buildings. He would like to point out that unless they brought the secondary schools within the reach of the settlers it meant that settlers' children must go without a secondary education. He was much pleased indeed to find that the honourable gentleman had seen the error of his ways, because it was sometimes very difficult to convince him that he was wrong. He hoped before the session closed the honourable gentleman would see his way to give some small assistance to the Board there to enable them to put up a suitable building. They did not want assistance to carry on the school,—they were prepared to pay that out of their own pockets,—but they asked for some little assistance to enable them to put up a healthy building.

Mr. HALL hoped the Minister would do nothing of the kind. He thought the secondary schools ought to be placed under the Education Boards. He did not, however, object to grants to secondary schools, provided the expenditure of the money was properly supervised; but the best thing would be to merge them in the primary schools.

Mr. J. W. KELLY maintained that the secondary schools would never be placed upon a satisfactory footing until they were taken over by the Government—and the whole of the reserves along with them—and conducted the same as our primary schools. That was the true solution of the question. The class of people whom honourable gentlemen would like to see taking advantage of secondary schools would never be in a position to do so until the charging of fees was abolished: until then the working-classes would never be able to take advantage of the schools.

Mr. BUDDO trusted the House would be reasonable in this matter and, before they did anything in reference to the secondary schools, would see to it that our primary schools were in a satisfactory condition. There were places in outlying districts in which the school-accommodation was very meagre indeed. As to grants for secondary schools, he questioned very much the propriety of them. In the district which he represented they had a very good secondary school, but he was sorry to say the advantage taken of that school was almost nil. He believed it would be improved by being brought more in touch with the primary system. He was much pleased to

Mr. Reeves

hear that the Minister of Education was considering this question.

Dr. NEWMAN thought reform should go in the direction of making the primary, secondary, and university education systems run more in line, and those systems might be all governed by a central establishment, with branch governing bodies. Until that House was prepared to vote a very considerable sum of money to aid secondary schools it would be quite impossible for them to pay the teachers' salaries. He would be prepared to support the grant of considerable sums to be devoted to aid secondary schools, so as to widen their doors to many who could not afford the high fees.

Mr. MORRISON said that secondary education could not be conducted in a very much worse way than it was at present. Until secondary education was placed in the hands of the Government and run, as it should be run, as an intermediary system between the primary and university systems, it would cost the large sum it was costing at present. If his suggestion were adopted, the system would not cost half what was being expended on it to-day. The primary schools should take the children on to a certain stage, then they should pass on to the secondary schools, and so on to the university, if necessary.

Mr. G. W. RUSSELL said, with regard to the matter of secondary schools, he would like to remark that he somewhat disagreed with one of the proposals which had been made—namely, that those schools should be placed in the hands of the central department. He thought anything done in that direction would be a very great mistake. The policy should be not in the direction of centralisation, but rather of decentralisation. If they were going to make secondary schools really effective, what he thought they should do would be to put them, to some extent, under the control of the Education Boards, so that there might be continuity between the primary-school system and the high schools. He entirely sympathized with any movement in the direction of widening the doors of our secondary institutions. He considered that at the present time the cost of the secondary schools was enormous in comparison with the amount of good that was being gained from them. The cost of the secondary schools per head of the children attending them was some £26. Yet there were large numbers of children in outlying districts who had to go without education, or received education under great disadvantages. This was a branch of the education system which required dealing with. Whenever the Minister dealt with this question in a comprehensive manner he would give the honourable gentleman his hearty support. He thought they might localise the granting of scholarships, instead of granting them to such large districts as was the case at present. The present high schools were class schools, and there was a great deal of juvenile Toryism in them of the worst type. They should afford facilities for a greater number of children to receive the benefits of secondary education. With regard to colonialising endowments, as

he represented a district which had set aside endowments for itself, he was not prepared to allow the people in other parts, who had spent their money on roads and bridges instead of education, to handle these endowments.

Mr. McLACHLAN thought all the endowments both for primary and secondary education should be put together in a lump, and he thought no child should be allowed to enter a secondary school unless he had passed the Fourth or Fifth Standard.

The CHAIRMAN said the honourable gentleman must not travel beyond the inspection of schools.

Mr. THOMPSON moved to report progress. Motion negatived.

Mr. THOMPSON asked if there was anything to prevent their utilising the services of the Inspectors in Wellington for the purpose of examining the secondary schools.

Mr. REEVES said the Inspector-General inspected the secondary schools, but if they had an examination they would have to make special and very elaborate arrangements for it.

Mr. HOGG moved to reduce the vote by £1. He objected to an increase in the salary of one of the subordinate officers unless they could increase the salary of the Inspector-General.

Amendment negatived, and vote, £2,472, agreed to.

Public schools, £368,100.

Mr. BELL said it had been stated that secondary schools were simply class establishments. That was true to this extent: that a certain number of young children went to the secondary schools who might be at the primary schools, and would perhaps be better there. But, so far as his experience went, in two districts the statement was, beyond that extent, entirely incorrect. He spoke as a governor of two secondary schools. It was true there were certain children whose parents were not able to provide the fee, though the fee was a small one, and the parents of children of exceptional intelligence were, so far as his experience went, willing and able to undergo the sacrifice involved in providing the necessary fees, which were not prohibitive. If they went through the lists of the names of children in these secondary schools they would see that the allegation that they were class-schools was unfounded. It would be a great mistake, he thought, to cast the burden of secondary education upon the country. While it was their clear duty to provide a system of primary education, free and undenominational, it was not their duty out of the funds of the State, unaided in any way by the parents, to provide a system of higher education.

Mr. G. W. RUSSELL said his statement had been challenged that these schools were to a large extent class schools. He would give the fees at the two institutions of which the honourable member for Wellington City was a governor. In the Wellington College the ordinary day-school fees were £13 4s. and £12 10s., and in the Nelson College £12 12s.

and £8 8s. If the honourable gentleman denied that those fees were prohibitive so far as the general body of the people were concerned, he had an entirely different idea of the wealth and position of the great body of the people from that which he (Mr. Russell) entertained. These high schools and colleges were almost exclusively institutions where the children of what were known as the upper classes in society received so-called genteel education, without coming in contact with the children belonging to other classes of society. The fees he had given with regard to the two institutions with which the honourable gentleman was connected corroborated absolutely the truth of his contention that the secondary schools were class schools.

Mr. REEVES said the honourable member for Hawke's Bay asked his views with regard to the inspection of the primary schools. He (Mr. Reeves) thought the system of inspection should be centralised. They should never get anything like uniformity or universal efficiency until the inspection was centralised. With regard to the teaching of cookery, that rested entirely with the Boards; and, with regard to school-books, he had done all he could to make the books used more uniform. It was ridiculous to suppose that what was considered to be the best book in an Otago school should not also be the best book for an Auckland school. Why should a child, shifted from one district to another, or from one part of a district to another part of the same district, have to put its parents to the expense of a new set of books? As to the Reader, that book was nearly ready, and would be submitted to the best expert advice that could be obtained; it would then be printed and circulated amongst the Boards, and he would do his best to get it universally used. He quite agreed with the views that had been expressed by several honourable members with reference to teachers' salaries; but it would require legislation, and it would be for Parliament to say if the Minister should have power in the matter, or that things should remain as they were now. He quite agreed with the honourable member for Avon as to the necessity for greater uniformity, and, if his own views on this question were given effect to, then they would have something like a national system of education, instead of thirteen provincial systems. The honourable member for Masterton wanted to know why an Inspector should have all the power in regard to passing children from standard to standard, and whether there should not be freedom on the part of the teachers so far as concerned the lower standards. An Order in Council was issued last July giving teachers freedom of classification in the lower standards, and that system was now being pursued.

Mr. McNAB said he agreed with the honourable member for Wellington City (Mr. Bell) that the high schools throughout the colony were not class institutions. The high school in Southland was nothing like a class institution. The fees which were charged were high, but the result was that a great number

of other children were educated there at no expense to their parents.

Mr. W. HUTCHISON said that any person who supposed that our secondary schools were not class schools did not understand what class schools meant. There was not only class distinction in the matter of fees, but in the matter of dress and books, and altogether they were class schools in every intent and purpose. The very buildings themselves made them class schools, and the whole of the arrangements were of an essentially different character from those of the public schools, and designedly meant to bring up a different class of children.

Mr. GREEN said there were twenty-four scholarship-holders in the high schools in Dunedin every year—twelve senior and twelve junior—and they included both boys and girls: those scholarship-owners were the children of all sorts and conditions of men. The children who got the education in these high schools, and were scholarship-winners, were the children of parents residing throughout the provincial district, and were not the children of Dunedin people simply. The number of scholars who were given free education by the liberality of the Board of Governors of these schools was eighty, and they were allowed that great privilege because they obtained 50 per cent. of the obtainable marks at the scholarship examination of the children who had attended the primary schools, and who were of the masses and not the classes. He had been led to make these remarks in contradiction to the remarks made by the honourable member for Dunedin City (Mr. W. Hutchison). He regretted to hear opinions expressed that these institutions should be placed under the control of the central department. He did not think they would be any better administered by the central department than by the present officers and Boards. The members of Education Boards and governing bodies had the best of local knowledge, and were advancing the true interests of education.

Mr. GRAHAM said, as regarded the Nelson colleges, a large number of the pupils there were scholarship-holders from the primary schools, their education at the colleges being paid for, first by the Education Board, and subsequently by further scholarships which they won at the colleges. There were no class distinctions, and the children who went there from the State schools were received with every consideration. Some of the brightest scholars ever turned out from the Nelson colleges, both boys and girls, were those who had won State-school scholarships with which to start on their course of secondary education; and he wished to make these remarks in contradiction to the statements made by the honourable member for Riccarton. With reference to primary education, however, he believed that nowhere else was this imparted with anything like the same thoroughness as was done in our State schools. He agreed with the previous speakers as to the salaries paid to female teachers. He found that in

Mr. McNab

Nelson there was a great disproportion in the salaries paid to male and female teachers, and, although it had been pointed out to the Education Board that in paying such low salaries to the female teachers they were breaking their own by-laws, they could get no redress. The consequence was, they had lost some of their best teachers. He hoped a measure would be brought in, not later than next session, to place the Inspectors under the central department, and to equalise the teachers' salaries.

Mr. McLACHLAN, speaking for Christchurch, said it was quite apparent that the secondary schools were class institutions. The members of the governing bodies were elected by the graduates of the University, and the management was a class one. He did not refer to Christ's College. In his opinion institutions belonging to the people should be directed by the people.

Mr. BUDDO thought the national system of education was not sufficiently centralised. The School Committees seemed to have very few duties, and the work would be more effectively done if they had large Education Boards. The clamouring of the different localities for redress would not be so frequent if the Education Boards embraced a wider area. As to the question of class education, he thought if the scholarships were kept within certain areas it would do away with a good deal of the trouble. The children should be taught to earn their living with their hands by means of object-lessons; it would prevent to a large extent this continual scramble for Government and other billets. He also considered that the fees for secondary education should be reduced. They would then find that the number of students at those schools would be very largely increased, and there certainly was room for a great many more.

Major STEWARD was a governor of the Ashburton and had been a governor of the Waimate High School. The governors in those districts were appointed by the Education Boards, the local bodies, and the Government, so that there was very fair representation. A great many of the students in those schools were the holders of scholarships won at the primary schools. Then, in the case of Waimate, they had adopted the system of paying an additional master for the primary school to give education in classics and other subjects, so that within the one building they were able to give the same advantages to the more forward pupils as they would receive in the secondary schools. This did away with a good deal of the force of the argument of those who opposed the secondary schools as being class schools.

Mr. R. MCKENZIE said there were twenty-eight schools in the Buller and Inangahua Counties which had no representative on the Education Board. He hoped the Minister of Education would pay a visit to these districts, and look into the matter. He believed in local School Committees, which could manage the affairs of the schools better than they could

be managed by those who were some hundreds of miles away. He did not see the use of Education Boards as at present constituted, although they cost something like £32,000.

Mr. ALLEN believed in the system of School Committees, as local control was needed. By this means the adult population was kept in constant touch with the education system. With regard to the secondary education free, the State could not bear the cost. At present those who could pay the fees and those who had obtained scholarships could continue their studies in the secondary schools, and as a rule those who won scholarships were drawn from those who could not afford to pay. Did any member say that any State could afford to open the doors of its secondary schools to every child in the land? You would have to limit it even then. They provided in Dunedin that any child who gained 50 per cent. of the marks at a primary school might go to the secondary schools. He hoped the attack upon the School Committees was not one which would be coincided in by many honourable gentlemen, and he hoped the attack on the secondary schools would not be sympathized with by the majority of honourable members. The secondary schools were doing good work.

Mr. THOMPSON said every day settlement was extending over the colony, and yet no provision was made for new secondary schools. Those schools were limited to the old, settled districts. He thought the weak point of our education system was the provincial element which controlled the appointment of Inspectors. He thought the Inspectors should be appointed by the central department, and be altogether independent of the provincial Boards. There should be greater uniformity throughout the colony in the salaries of teachers. The only way to get rid of the present anomalies was to have a national system of education, and to place all the educational endowments under one controlling body. Until they nationalised the education endowments it was impossible to have a fair and reasonable system of education. The time was not far off, he thought, when that House would insist on nationalising the whole of the educational endowments. He begged to move, That the vote be reduced by £1, as an expression of opinion of the members of this House that the whole of our educational endowments should be nationalised.

Mr. J. W. KELLY said it seemed to him that our secondary-education system cost too much money. The sooner some investigation was held into the high-school system throughout the colony the better it would be. No one in the House was a truer friend to secondary education than he was. He would support at any time a proposal to nationalise our education endowments, and he would like to see education made free from the primary to the university system.

Mr. REEVES would like to point out that the debate on this question would more properly come on when he introduced next year the Endowed Schools Bill. He was pleased to see that in that House there was a very general

interest taken in the state of education, and there was a general disposition to think that, though the present system was really a good one, it might be made still better by reasonable improvement. The Government hoped next session to introduce two or three Bills with the object of improving the system without injuring it.

Mr. HOGG said the secondary system was one under which only comparatively wealthy people were able to send their children to the secondary schools; and another weak spot in this connection was that the secondary schools were a combination of nursery or infant schools with juvenile colleges or high schools; and, moreover, children were sent to them because the primary schools were not good enough for the parents. He maintained that the whole of the education funds, whether arising from endowments or otherwise, were, properly speaking, the property of the children of New Zealand, and it was unfair that there should be no secondary schools except in the large centres. He could not see the use of the proposition to have cookery taught in the schools.

Mr. FLATMAN referred to the equalisation of salaries. With a national system of education, he did not see why the masters were paid on different scales in different districts; they should be classed so that each should be paid according to his grade. He would like to see the Inspectors change districts; and the working average ought to be applied, as the strict average was hard on the small country schools. The people in the country received very little benefit from the secondary-education system at present, and yet the colony was contributing towards its maintenance. The rents paid to Nelson College, for instance, amounted to £489 13s., and the interest on the money invested to £758 2s. 8d., while the money paid to that college by the School Commissioners amounted to £300, making a total of £1,542 15s. 8d. The £489 13s. that the institution received in rents belonged to the people, and the people ought to derive some benefit from it. At present the Education Boards were feeling the pinch of want of sufficient means, and certainly the primary system of education ought to be considered more than the secondary system.

Dr. NEWMAN noticed that £6,800 was put down for scholarships. If the Minister of Education brought down more money on the supplementary estimates it would enable them to make free all the secondary education in New Zealand. He hoped the time would come when our secondary education would be just as free as the primary education was. It was within the powers of the Education Boards to place cookery within the curriculum, but they had not sufficient money with which to provide the apparatus. The proceeds of the sale of the articles cooked would cover the cost of the materials used. The Inspectors who met in Wellington some time ago recommended the opening of evening "continuation" schools in the larger centres, and he therefore asked the Minister if he could not provide on the supplementary estimates the

necessary amount to enable this to be done. About £2,000 would be all that was necessary.

Mr. SAUNDERS was pained to think there was any member in the House prepared to assist the present Government to draw to themselves all the power they could from the localities. The best feature of the present system was that it enabled the parents of the children to be close observers of everything done in the schools, and the School Committees also served as a good training-ground for men who were preparing themselves to take a part in public affairs. The high-school endowments should be given up to the one system of State education, and our State education should be carried on as far as was necessary to qualify children to educate themselves after they left school to almost any point that a clever person might be inclined to go. If the £40,000 of reserves that were now divided among the high schools were taken to aid the building fund of the common schools the members of the Education Boards would not, as in many cases now, have to give their personal security to the bank for overdrafts, and the common-school buildings could be put into decent repair. Higher education could be left to take care of itself, and would be better managed than at present. They did not now teach as well as the State schools, and in many cases they did not require as high a qualification for the teachers as the common State schools required. He hoped honourable members would not take any step in the direction of centralising the control of our State education. In the interest of the education of the children, he would say they should not give up the local institutions and local supervision to a central Board at Wellington, but should keep the control of the schools, and have at least one specimen of what they could do in looking after their own affairs in their own localities.

Mr. HALL thought the country was groaning under the expense of the large number of local bodies that existed, and that the School Committees, with the central body at Wellington, would be quite capable of administering educational affairs. Education Boards he regarded as expensive and unnecessary; they employed a secretary and an architect, and there was also large cost in the way of buildings and stationery. Then, the School Inspectors should be removed periodically from place to place, and high schools that were subsidised by the State should be inspected by the District Inspectors, and all children who received secondary education should have some merit in them, and have shown capacity for receiving it. The high schools should be open only to children who had taken scholarships.

Mr. MASSEY agreed that the educational endowments should be nationalised, and teachers' salaries should be the same for the same class of work in all parts of the colony. At present the master of a school of from one hundred to one hundred and fifty in Auckland would receive £200 per annum; in Wanganui, £216; in Wellington, £235; in Otago, £275; and in North Canterbury, £230. He hoped arrange-

ments would be made by which teachers in equal positions doing the same work should receive the same salary. The education reserves had become exceedingly valuable, and ought to be used for the benefit of the whole country and not for the benefit of the particular part of the colony in which they were situated. He hoped the amendment would be carried, and that something would be done to give effect to the opinion expressed by it.

Mr. McGUIRE believed that reserves for university and secondary education should be merged into those for primary technical education, and that they should not be used for the purpose of educating the children of wealthy parents. The present system was not really national, but was a system of Board schools, and the different sets of books in different districts were a great disadvantage to people who had to go from one part of the colony to another. The School Inspectors should be moved periodically, and should be under the Inspector-General of Schools.

Mr. ALLEN said he would like to know from the Minister of Education whether copies of the report of the Inspector-General would be sent to the Boards governing the secondary schools. At present the report was made to the Minister, and the governing bodies of these schools had no idea of what the report was.

Mr. MEREDITH said our system of education was one of the finest in the Southern Hemisphere. With regard to Inspectors, he had no objection to the Inspectors being appointed by the Minister of Education, so long as the Inspectors were under the control of the different Boards of Education. The honourable member for Marsden advocated that the endowments for primary education should be nationalised. As a matter of fact they were nationalised at the present time.

Mr. THOMPSON.—But not the endowments for secondary education.

Mr. BUICK complained that there were comparatively few endowments in Marlborough for secondary education, and of little value. He agreed with honourable members who advocated that the endowments for secondary education should be nationalised.

Mr. E. M. SMITH said he intended to support the amendment, and in his opinion it was high time that they "collared" the endowments for secondary education. He wanted to save the 10,000 acres endowment in Taranaki before it was taken by the senior member for Wellington City for the Middle District University.

Mr. THOMPSON said the complaints made were not against the primary-education endowments, but against the secondary-education endowments, and there should be no favour shown to individual districts in this respect. All should be treated alike. He suggested that the endowments for secondary education should be nationalised, and he wanted the Government to bring in a measure next session dealing thoroughly with the whole question. That was the reason he proposed the amendment, and he hoped honourable mem-

bers would show that the people of the colony were determined that the same facilities in regard to secondary education should be placed within the reach of all.

The Committee divided on the question, "That the vote be reduced by £1."

AYES, 16.

Buick	Houston	Smith, E. M.
Carnell	Hutchison, G.	Wilson.
Hall	Kelly, J. W.	
Harris	Lang	<i>Tellers.</i>
Heke	Massey	McLachlan
Hogg	O'Regan	Thompson.

NOES, 43.

Allen	Joyce	Pinkerton
Bell	Larnach	Pirani
Buchanan	Lawry	Reeves
Buddo	Mackenzie, T.	Russell, G. W.
Cadman	Mackintosh	Saunders
Carncross	Maclin	Seddon
Collins	McGowan	Stevens
Crowther	McKenzie, J.	Steward
Duncan	McKenzie, R.	Tanner
Earnshaw	McNab	Ward
Flatman	Mills	Willis.
Fraser	Montgomery	
Graham	Morrison	<i>Tellers.</i>
Green	Newman	Meredith
Hall-Jones	Parata	Smith, G. J.

Majority against, 27.

Amendment negatived.

Vote, £363,100, agreed to.

Native schools, £12,720.

Dr. NEWMAN asked if Native schools would be established at Kerioi and Pipiriki.

Mr. REEVES said the department was trying to make arrangements to establish schools at those places, but the difficulty was regarding sites. The Government had done its best, but it was useless to place buildings on land unless they had a proper title. It simply meant that in time they would come to be woolsheds and meeting-houses for the Natives.

Mr. ALLEN understood that the policy was to merge these schools into the public schools.

Mr. REEVES said that was done as far as possible.

Mr. ALLEN would, then, ask why the number of teachers had been increased from a hundred and twenty-two to a hundred and thirty.

Mr. REEVES said some fresh schools had been opened.

Mr. BELL suggested that the Government should take power to take land compulsorily for sites for Native schools.

Mr. G. W. RUSSELL asked why the item for contingencies had been increased from £150 to £400.

Mr. REEVES said it included various items. The expenses of a travelling teacher for giving certain special lessons to the Natives were paid out of that item.

Mr. MEREDITH thought, with regard to the inspection of Native schools, that the Canterbury Board would have no objection to allow one of their Inspectors to inspect the Native

schools in the Canterbury District, and he thought other Boards might do the same. This would allow of one of the Inspectors being dispensed with.

Mr. REEVES said if an offer were received from any of the Education Boards he would be very much pleased to consider it.

Mr. HALL asked if the Minister would consider the question of establishing a Native school at Tahoraite.

Mr. REEVES replied that if he received any request from the Natives there he would be happy to consider it.

Mr. WILLIS asked what was to be done with regard to a Native school at Tokaano. He had been informed that there were about two hundred children in that locality who were without education. The Natives, he believed, would be prepared to set apart a piece of land for the purpose.

Mr. REEVES said the place where the present unused school-building stood was very much out of the way, but he would be glad to favourably consider any offer by the Natives there to support a better-situated school.

Mr. HEKE thought the establishment of something in the nature of agricultural or industrial schools would be a great benefit to the Natives. He would like to see the State relieved altogether of the cost of keeping up the Native schools, as he believed the Natives themselves would be prepared to grant endowments for that purpose. He would point out that in many cases Native children who had been to school, and had passed the Fourth Standard, just merely went home and gradually forgot everything that they had been taught while at school, and the education expended on them was wasted.

Mr. THOMPSON bore out what the last speaker had said so far as it related to the back-country districts. On the outskirts of settlement, however, many of the Native children profited greatly by the education they received. He thought the Government might reorganize the whole system, for at present at least two-thirds of the money spent on Native schools was thrown away.

Mr. PARATA said it was the fault of the Natives. In the South Island the Native schools were better managed.

Mr. G. W. RUSSELL thought the remarks of the honourable member for Marsden were very much overdrawn with regard to the teachers in Native schools. From previous knowledge in the North Island he could say that the Native schools were doing good work. He thought, however, these schools might be improved: for instance, the first principles of agriculture might be taught to the Native children.

Vote, £12,720, agreed to.

Industrial schools, £9,648.

Mr. G. J. SMITH asked the reason for the increase in the item, "Burnham: Manager at £190, and matron at £70—£260," the sum voted last year being £240. Had the management during the past year been such as to warrant the increase? Was the Minister satisfied?

Again, there was a decrease in the item, "Maintenance—Provisions, fuel, &c." He hoped that did not mean that the provisioning department was to be somewhat limited, and that the children were to suffer in consequence.

Mr. REEVES.—No.

Mr. G. J. SMITH said there was a difference between the amount put down in the estimates as the amount expended last year for maintenance of children in private industrial schools and the amount set down in the papers laid on the table of the House.

Mr. REEVES said the master at Burnham had received a small increase; he had been there a long time. The reduction in the vote for maintenance did not mean that there would be any reduction in the comforts of the children. The Kohimarama and Thames schools had been closed, and that reduced the vote.

Mr. MEREDITH desired to draw attention to the unsatisfactory condition of the private industrial schools. The figures given in the annual report of the Minister of Education showed that in the Government institutions 21 per cent. were in residence and 79 per cent. domesticated, whilst in private schools only 14 per cent. were boarded out, 86 per cent. being in residence. He contended that that was a most undesirable and an unsatisfactory condition of matters. It was very desirable that these children should be so placed that when they left these institutions they might be able to get an honest living; hence the necessity for having those children domesticated. The sum placed to the credit of the children of the Government schools in the Post-Office Savings-Bank was £7,383 11s. 6d.—an average of £6 8s. 8d. per child—while in the private schools the amount was only £189 6s. 2d., or an average of 9s. 5d. for each child. He thought these figures disclosed a most unsatisfactory condition of affairs. He thought it was desirable and necessary, in the interests of the children and of the country at large, that some steps should be taken to place those institutions on a more satisfactory footing.

Mr. REEVES said it was quite true that the proportion boarded out from the private schools referred to was small, but the honourable gentleman forgot that the Government boarded out a large number of Catholic children. He thought it was fair to presume that those who were best suited for being boarded out were being boarded out by the Government department, instead of being left to be boarded out by the private schools. That explained to a considerable extent the larger proportion of children boarded out of Government schools. Although it was true the private-school authorities displayed a strong tendency to keep their children in, it was only fair to add that they were exceedingly well looked after. He had placed before those schools his views as to reducing the age for apprenticing their children out, and he had received an assurance that they would put the children out sooner than they had done.

Mr. MEREDITH moved, That the vote be reduced by the sum of £1, as an indication of

the disapproval by the House of the management of private industrial schools.

Mr. G. W. RUSSELL supported the amendment. On looking over the return he found that, out of 294 in St. Mary's, at Nelson, no less than 255 were in residence, while at Caversham, out of a total of 479, 205 were out at service, only 100 being in residence.

Mr. MASSEY supported the amendment. There was something radically wrong with the whole management.

Mr. GREEN thought the amendment would not effect what was desired. In the Act of 1889 power was given to the Resident Magistrate to commit to any industrial school in the colony. He thought it would be better if the Magistrate only had the power to deal with criminal cases, leaving the poor and indigent children to be dealt with by the Board.

Mr. T. MACKENZIE said the honourable gentleman's own Inspector reported that the boarding-out system was not a success, and that in some cases in Auckland there was most glaring inhumanity shown in connection with the system.

Mr. MEREDITH showed that these private industrial schools made a profit out of the children kept there, and he therefore drew the inference that this was the reason why they were not boarded out. He knew that the children who were boarded out in his own district and the neighbouring district were well looked after, and were thoroughly domesticated. It was the only system in the interest of the children, and the plan adopted in the public industrial schools should be adopted also in the private schools.

Mr. SAUNDERS said the expense of maintaining children in the private industrial schools was much greater than it ought to be, and their education was not what it ought to be. Then, the fact that the children in Burnham were not taught to bake their own bread seemed to be almost a crime. He objected altogether to State aid to sectarian or denominational schools.

Mr. THOMPSON held that before the State paid over money to any private institution it should insist that the children should be properly taught trades; and, instead of being huddled together in these institutions, they should be boarded out. There was an impression in the House that these children were kept unnecessarily long in these institutions.

The Committee divided on the question, "That the vote of £9,648 be reduced by £1."

AYES, 19.

Allen	Lang	Smith, G. J.
Buchanan	Maslin	Tanner
Buick	Massey	Thompson.
Carncross	McLachlan	
Earnshaw	Mitchelson	<i>Tellers.</i>
Green	Newman	Meredith
Houston	Saunders	Russell, G. W.

NOES, 83.

Bell	Carnell	Flatman
Buddo	Collins	Fraser
Cadman	Duncan	Graham

Mr. G. J. Smith

Hall	McKenzie, J.	Seddon
Hall-Jones	McKenzie, R.	Smith, E. M.
Harris	McNab	Stevens
Hogg	Morrison	Ward
Kelly, J. W.	O'Regan	Willis.
Larnach	Pinkerton	<i>Tellers.</i>
Mackenzie, T.	Pirani	Lawry
McGowan	Reeves	Mills.
McGuire		

Majority against, 14.

Amendment negatived.

Vote, £9,648, agreed to.

School for Deaf-mutes, £3,162.

Mr. HALL-JONES wished to know how it was that, with the pupils decreasing, the amount was the same as last year. It seemed monstrous that in such an institution there should be so many officials.

Mr. REEVES said that unfortunately there had been a reduction in the number of pupils, and some of the best-paying ones had gone. Nearly the whole of those now at the institution were paying nothing, or very little. The pupils were so helpless, and required so much attention, that it would be inhuman to reduce the number of those who had to take care of them. The greatest vigilance and care had to be exercised.

Mr. G. W. RUSSELL wished to know if it was true that the daughter of the Director of this institution had started an opposition private school, and had taken away a number of the children who formerly were sent to this school.

Mr. REEVES said that was so, but he had no power to interfere, or to stop her. He believed all the children who were sent to her could be counted on the fingers of one hand.

Mr. SAUNDERS wished to know what number of deaf-mutes were being taught for the £3,162.

Mr. REEVES said the number was forty-six.

Mr. HALL-JONES believed that these helpless boys had been in the habit of growing a good deal of produce—under supervision, of course—and that at one time it had not been properly used. What now became of it?

Mr. REEVES said the whole thing had been gone into by a Royal Commission, and sifted to the bottom. There was really very little wrong, but they had changed the system of management so that the suspicion should be impossible for the future. Anything that was grown in the garden was used in the school.

Mr. SAUNDERS thought that when the daughter took away the children from the school the right course would have been to remove the Director. He would move, That the vote be reduced by £450.

Mr. REEVES said that Mr. Van Asch was simply the whole life and soul of the teaching in the institution. He was known as a good teacher of deaf-mutes in England, and had more than a colonial reputation. The assistants would be totally incapable of conducting the school.

Mr. G. J. SMITH said honourable members appeared to forget that the children in this

school required a peculiar amount of attention. The school could not be carried on without a director.

Mr. COLLINS was absolutely certain it was simply impossible that a deaf-and-dumb institution could be carried on more effectively than this was. The deaf-and-dumb were taught to hold converse with any one by speech, and, in addition to schooling, were given technical instruction. If members were acquainted with the institution it would be agreed all round that too much was not expended on it.

Mr. THOMPSON thought the fact that changes had been made proved that there had been something wrong. Was there no one else in the colony fit to take charge of the school? If there was, he thought Mr. Van Asch should be allowed to devote his time to looking after his own interests.

Mr. SAUNDERS said that the fact that the daughter of the Director of the school had set up an institution to which people preferred to send their children proved that Mr. Van Asch was not the only person in the colony who could conduct a deaf-mutes' school.

Amendment negatived, and vote, £3,162, agreed to.

Vote, School for the Blind, £570, agreed to.

Miscellaneous services, £800.

Dr. NEWMAN wished to know why this sum was asked for, when it had not all been spent last year.

Mr. REEVES said it never was all spent; but by some mistake the people in Dunedin who were entitled to a share in the vote had neglected to apply for it, and the vote had lapsed. This year they would probably spend the whole £800.

Mr. PINKERTON said it was owing to the illness of Mr. Thompson that the money was not applied for.

Vote, £800, agreed to.

Lunacy and Charitable Department: Lunatic asylums, £45,628.

Mr. G. W. RUSSELL asked what was the position of the Inspector of Lunatic Asylums and Hospitals, £1,200. Was he an officer at present under engagement for a definite period, and when would that come to an end?

Mr. REEVES said he was in the position of an ordinary Civil servant.

Mr. G. W. RUSSELL moved, That the first item be reduced by £200.

Mr. REEVES said the Inspector filled the most thankless, laborious, and arduous office it was possible to fill. He had saved his salary over and over again. The Lunacy Department was thoroughly well administered, and it would be a most undesirable thing to drive such an efficient officer out of the Service.

Amendment negatived.

Mr. G. W. RUSSELL asked if it was a fact that the Medical Superintendent at Sunnyside, Dr. Levinge, was away for six months on full pay.

Mr. REEVES said he was away for six months on full pay, and he had thoroughly earned his holiday. He was one of the most

successful officers in the Service, and the difference of cost per head in the Sunnyside Asylum compared with other asylums in the colony was due to his excellent management.

Mr. G. W. RUSSELL said that no greater tyrant, not even the Czar of Russia, existed than Dr. Levinge towards the attendants at Sunnyside. There would be an inquiry some day, and the revelations made as to the tyranny of Dr. Levinge over the attendants in that institution would make the Minister's hair stand on end.

Mr. REEVES said that if anything like what the honourable gentleman made out was found to be correct an inquiry would, of course, be made.

Mr. HOGG protested against men with fat salaries being allowed so long a leave of absence on full pay.

Mr. TANNER asked whether it was a fact that within three months' time of Dr. Levinge taking charge of the Sunnyside Asylum he swept out every one of the fifty or sixty attendants in the place, and many of them were now spending the remainder of their lives having a holiday without pay.

Mr. REEVES believed it was a fact that a large number of changes were made in Sunnyside, but not simply by Dr. Levinge. The department was responsible for them, and the changes were made by the department and Dr. MacGregor after careful inquiry.

Mr. TANNER asked if the changes were made by orders from head-quarters; or was it a fact that Dr. Levinge said he would surround himself entirely with new faces?

Mr. REEVES could not say what rumours existed years and years ago, but Dr. MacGregor stated to him more than once that he found it necessary to have changes made in the Sunnyside Asylum.

Mr. G. W. RUSSELL asked the Minister if he thought it necessary for the attendants, who were placed in closer contact with lunatics than the Medical Superintendent, to have a holiday.

Mr. REEVES said the attendants had an annual holiday of a fortnight, and, besides that, as he had in Christchurch, in conversation, promised the honourable member for Riccarton, they were allowed a day's holiday every month.

Mr. MEREDITH said the statements made by the honourable member for Riccarton were of a most alarming character, and demanded investigation.

Mr. REEVES had promised that if a *prima facie* case were made out an inquiry would be held.

Mr. MEREDITH gave Dr. Levinge every credit for good management; the farm especially showed a satisfactory condition of affairs; while the average weekly cost per head of the inmates was the lowest of all the asylums in the colony. The Sunnyside Lunatic Asylum stood at the head of the list for economical management.

Dr. NEWMAN desired to draw attention to the increased number of admissions, the

number of admissions last year having been seventy-one over that of the previous year. Was there any particular reason other than that given in the report?

Mr. REEVES said the Medical Superintendents reported that it was not due to drink nor to lunatics coming from foreign countries, but the solution seemed to be the many years of bad times and falling prices and the consequent financial worry and trouble.

Mr. THOMPSON differed from this statement. He believed the Salvation Army was the cause of a good many of the admissions. The Army had been the means of sending more than one Native he knew of to the Asylum.

Vote, £45,628, agreed to.

Charitable, £1,644.

Mr. J. W. KELLY drew attention to the item of £750 for heating the wards of Dunedin Hospital. He wished to enter his protest against the exceptional treatment Dunedin had received. That Hospital had already had a grant of £8,000, and this £750 was additional. The Hospital at Invercargill was described in Dr. MacGregor's report as the second worst hospital in the colony—as absolutely infected with disease-germs, and as utterly unfit for the purpose.

Mr. SEDDON said the £8,000 had been promised by the late Mr. Ballance, and without the further expenditure of £750 it would have been of no benefit. Under the circumstances, he had had to approve of it. He admitted that Dunedin had been very well treated.

Mr. GREEN denied the statement that the Dunedin Hospital was endowed to the extent of £25,000. The expenditure of £8,000 was absolutely required, as a Royal Commission had reported that the Hospital was in such a condition that it was unwise to conduct operations in it. Only a portion of the money recommended by that Commission had been expended, and at least £2,000 less than was promised by the late Mr. Ballance to a deputation who waited upon him in Wellington, as reported to the Trustees by their Chairman, Mr. Miller, and Dr. Batchelor on their return.

Mr. G. W. RUSSELL said, in connection with this £750 for the Dunedin Hospital, that a reply had been given to a deputation from Canterbury some time ago asking for the same assistance for the Christchurch Hospital, that the Government had laid down the principle that for the future hospital districts must rate themselves to provide money for works of a permanent nature, and there was a Bill to be introduced for that purpose. And now they were going to vote a sum of £750 for an institution that last year had over £8,000.

Mr. REEVES said the promise was made to the Dunedin institution long before the rule to which the honourable member for Riccarton referred was laid down by the Government.

Mr. BUICK asked upon what basis the money was paid for female refuge work.

Mr. REEVES said it was paid upon the basis of a calculation made by Dr. MacGregor on the moneys laid out, and the work done by the various institutions.

Mr. Reeves

Mr. MEREDITH considered the basis on which that money was allocated was a wrong one.

Mr. REEVES said it had been done on an entirely non-political basis.

Vote, £1,644, agreed to.

Vote, Rotorua Sanatorium, £1,161, agreed to. Department of Labour, £3,630.

Mr. THOMPSON noticed that there was an increase in this department. According to the papers a few days ago, he noticed that the "unemployed" difficulty in Melbourne had disappeared, and the Mayor of Melbourne had made a statement to that effect. Twelve months ago the "unemployed" difficulty had assumed far greater proportions than in New Zealand; and it seemed to him that it was inadvisable to establish a permanent Labour Department here. The Government should endeavour to get rid of the "unemployed" trouble as they had done in Victoria. He hoped the Government would make inquiries, and take some steps in that direction.

Mr. REEVES quite agreed with the honourable gentleman. He himself was anxious to get the information, and inquiries were being made.

Vote, £3,630, agreed to.

CLASS IX.—MINES DEPARTMENT.

Mines Department, £4,910.

Mr. ALLEN asked for an explanation of the item, "Lecturers and instructors, schools of mines."

Mr. CADMAN said this was not a new vote. The amount appeared previously under another head. There was a slight increase, for it was intended to establish three scholarships in the schools of mines, and it had also been decided that the outside schools should be visited by a peripatetic lecturer.

Mr. R. MCKENZIE asked if a lecturer would be appointed to the School of Mines at Denniston.

Mr. CADMAN said it was not intended to appoint a permanent lecturer there.

Mr. R. MCKENZIE said Denniston was the principal mining centre in the colony, and could not be called an outside district.

Mr. CADMAN said that lecturers were required more for gold-mining districts than for coal-mining districts.

Mr. R. MCKENZIE asked if the Minister would make arrangements for examinations of candidates for mine-managers' certificates to be held at Westport or Denniston. At present those desiring to be examined for certificates had to travel a considerable distance, to Reefton or Greymouth.

Mr. CADMAN said he would look into the matter and see if he could do anything.

Vote, £4,910, agreed to.

Vote, Meteorological and Museum Department, £535, agreed to.

Miscellaneous services, £12,950.

Mr. ALLEN asked if further assistance would not be given to the Otago School of Mines.

Mr. CADMAN said he had not had time to go fully into this matter, but the subject would be considered later on.

Mr. G. W. RUSSELL asked for an explanation of the item, "Compensation and expenses in connection with the resumption of land for water-races, and proclamation of rivers as watercourses for receiving tailings." £5,000 was asked for this year. £4,000 was asked for last year, and only £1,298 expended.

Mr. CADMAN said claims had been received for over £20,000. This was a serious question, and would probably involve a much larger sum.

Mr. ALLEN would like to know what the Minister intended to do in connection with this matter. At present numbers of persons were suffering, and it was desirable that relief should be given to them.

Mr. CADMAN might tell the honourable gentleman that he had a Bill on the stocks which was almost ready to be submitted to the Cabinet. As soon as the Cabinet came to a decision on the subject the Bill would be brought forward. That Bill dealt not only with this question mentioned by the honourable gentleman, but it also dealt with the question of deep levels, which was agitating the goldfields community from one end of the colony to the other.

Vote, £12,950, agreed to.

CLASS X.—DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE.

Department of Agriculture, £34,001.

Mr. G. W. RUSSELL wished to express his dissatisfaction at the appointment of the Produce Commissioner in England, and especially as his salary had been raised £100. In all parts of the country the people were utterly disappointed with this gentleman when he came out to New Zealand, and there were, without doubt, numbers of people who knew more practically with regard to the dairying industry than this gentleman did. He might have knowledge with regard to Home-markets, but, as an expert in dairying, he could assure the Minister that there were a great many men in New Zealand who were far more competent. He was expressing the opinion of all the practical men whom he had come in contact with. Had Mr. Valentine received an engagement for any particular time?

Mr. J. MCKENZIE said Mr. Valentine had not been engaged for any particular time. He had been sent out by the Agent-General. Before that he was Commissioner for the New South Wales Government in England, and did very good work there, apparently. He saw one report of this gentleman which was sent out to him by the Agent-General—a report which showed that Mr. Valentine had knowledge, at any rate, as to finding markets for produce in the Old Country; and he was a man with very high certificates. He had been engaged in various parts of England in connection with dairying there, and also in Denmark, and had had some experience in America. He was sent out here, and after he had been here some time the Government came to the con-

clusion that it was very desirable to have a man at Home to find new markets for our dairy produce, and Mr. Valentine was accordingly selected for the purpose. He believed if they had not selected him the New South Wales Government would have engaged him, and, as he had said, Mr. Valentine had acted for that Government on a previous occasion.

Dr. NEWMAN asked if Mr. Valentine was doing work for New South Wales as well.

Mr. J. McKENZIE.—No.

Dr. NEWMAN did not understand what the Produce Commissioner was going to do in England. Were butter and cheese going to be consigned to him, or was he going to act as agent for people here?

Mr. J. McKENZIE said that some time ago, at the request of the Agent-General, Mr. Lowe was appointed to see in what condition our produce arrived at Home, and to report to the Government. He was also engaged to try and increase the market for our produce at Home. Mr. Valentine was taking his place, and was doing the same sort of work. Mr. Valentine was not engaged for any term.

Vote, £34,001, agreed to.

CLASS VII.—STAMP AND DEEDS DEPARTMENT.

Vote, Stamp Department, £4,675, agreed to.

Vote, Lands and Deeds Registry, £15,610, agreed to.

CHARGEABLE ON THE GOVERNMENT INSURANCE ACCOUNT.

Chargeable on the Government Insurance Account, £54,493.

Mr. PIRANI asked if there was any truth in the statement that one of the subordinate officers in this department was making over £1,000 a year out of commissions and salary. He understood the officer occupied the position of Superintendent of Agents.

Mr. WARD asked if the honourable gentleman referred to a letter which appeared in that morning's paper.

Mr. PIRANI said he did.

Mr. WARD said he had seen the letter, and had sent to make inquiries about it. He knew of no officer who received such a sum. If it was true, the matter would require to be looked into, and some information furnished to him. The statement in the letter was news to him.

Mr. BELL asked the Minister if he did not think £400 a year was too much to grant a medical officer who was able to carry on his ordinary practice. He had not a word to say against the appointment, but the salary was altogether exceptional. He would like to know what the medical officer of the Australian Mutual Provident received.

Mr. WARD would be glad to make inquiries. The same duties were performed by the present officer as by Dr. Henry. The medical officer was called upon to give his time to the business required by the department at all times.

Mr. MEREDITH asked how it was that 7 per cent. was charged on loans on policies, when the amount advanced was not anything like equal to the accumulated premiums.

Mr. J. McKenzie

Mr. WARD said 7 per cent. was charged for sums as low as £5. The average amount of the loans on policies was £50. They were repayable at any time; and the result was that unless this was done the department would lend money at worse value than if the rate throughout the year were 6 per cent. The matter was under consideration as to whether the rate could be lowered.

Dr. NEWMAN said it was stated in the Financial Statement that in future the Government would give notice that no investments with the Government should be at a higher rate than 4 per cent., and he wished to know whether this institution would not suffer in comparison with others which were lending money at an average of 6 or 6½ per cent.

Mr. WARD said a Bill would be introduced giving power of investing two-thirds of the funds outside the Government.

Mr. PIRANI asked what principle guided the Government in the appointment of agents. He noticed Resident Agents at Oamaru, Blenheim, and Greymouth—the latter at a salary of £250—while on making application for one at Palmerston North he had been told the place was too small.

Mr. WARD said it was all a matter of the amount of business that was to be done in a place. So far as Blenheim was concerned, it had been decided to transfer that district to the Nelson office; but the appointing of agents, in which great care was taken, depended entirely on the amount of business and the amount of policies to be attended to in a place.

Vote, £54,493, agreed to.

PUBLIC TRUST OFFICE EXPENSES ACCOUNT.

Vote, Public Trust Office Expenses Account, £8,484, agreed to.

CLASS XI.—WORKING RAILWAYS.

Working railways, £725,000.

Dr. NEWMAN asked if, in view of the fact that from the monthly returns up to July there was £26,000 to the bad, the Minister thought the estimate of revenue and expenditure would be caught up.

Mr. SEDDON said, with the floods and slips, *et cetera*, the expenditure he thought would be fully up to the estimate; and he had hopes the revenue would come near what was estimated.

Mr. PIRANI asked if anything was to be done in regard to the grievance about allowances to officers of the lower grades when away from home on duty.

Mr. SEDDON said the matter had not been forgotten, and something would be done in the matter.

Vote, £725,000, agreed to.

CLASS XII.—PUBLIC AND SCHOOL BUILDINGS, DOMAINS, AND INSPECTION OF MACHINERY DEPARTMENT.

Public buildings, £18,500.

Dr. NEWMAN said the members of the House were subjected to great inconvenience in regard to lack of room in the front part of

the building, more particularly through there only being one room to see their friends and visitors in. He thought that two or three new rooms should be added to the front part of the building.

Mr. SEDDON said if the circumstances proved favourable some attention might be paid to the matter. He himself thought something ought to be done.

Mr. G. J. SMITH asked whether the Government, in drawing up the supplementary estimates, would consider the possibility of doing something for the building of the Supreme Court library at Christchurch. It was a valuable library, and the building in which it was contained was very liable to destruction by fire.

Mr. SEDDON said he would make a note of it.

Mr. ALLEN said, with regard to the item of £1,500 for alterations, improvements, and repairs to the Parliament Buildings, that the amount yearly spent in this way would find interest and sinking fund on the cost of erecting new and permanent buildings. It would be cheaper to start at once with the erection of new buildings than to go on tinkering away at repairs, alterations, and ventilation every year as they were doing now.

Mr. SEDDON thought they had finished now all the improvements and alterations that were necessary until they started to erect new buildings. The money spent last year in this way was money well spent.

Mr. E. M. SMITH complimented the Premier upon this expenditure. The ventilation was a great improvement.

Mr. HALL-JONES asked whether provision was to be made for rebuilding the library. That was a most important matter.

Mr. CARNELL asked if the Government would make provision for a better police-station at Napier. The present building was very old, and totally unfit for the purpose.

Mr. SEDDON said the police-station at Napier certainly did require something to be done to it, and he would get a report from the Engineer to see what was necessary. As to the parliamentary library, he would like to be able to proceed with the erection of the building this year, but, in view of the prospects so far as the revenue was concerned, and considering also that there were other public buildings in Wellington that required attention, he would have to defer it for the present. As soon as those other things had been attended to it was the first work that required to be done.

Vote, £18,500, agreed to.

School-buildings, £31,000.

Dr. NEWMAN asked if this was the total vote for this purpose.

Mr. SEDDON said No; there would be another vote for school-buildings.

Mr. COLLINS asked the Premier if he could see his way to place a sum on the supplementary estimates to assist in building a technical school in Christchurch.

Mr. SEDDON said this was the first he had

heard of the matter. He would make inquiries.

Vote, £31,000, agreed to.

Vote, Government domains, £1,000, agreed to.

Vote, Inspection of machinery, £4,100, agreed to.

Progress reported.

WESTPORT-CARDIFF COAL COMPANY.

Mr. G. W. RUSSELL brought up a report from the Railways Committee on the petition of the Westport-Cardiff Coal Company, and moved, That the report be laid on the table, and be referred to the Government.

Mr. MITCHELSON wished to know whether the report could be received at that hour of the night, a quarter past one, as it was new business.

The ACTING-SPEAKER asked if the report was from a Committee which had power to sit while the House was sitting.

Mr. G. W. RUSSELL said that authority had been specially given for the Committee to sit during the sitting of the House.

The ACTING-SPEAKER said, then the report could be brought up at any period during which the House was sitting.

Mr. BELL pointed out that honourable gentlemen who were not in their places might desire to refer the report back to the Committee.

Mr. SEDDON said there were a large number of miners out of employment whom this matter might affect. If the question were referred to the Government, the Government could then refer it to the Railway Commissioners; and it was therefore desirable that there should be as little delay as possible.

Mr. MITCHELSON said the question dealt with in the report was a very large one, and very few members were now present. It was a most unfair thing to attempt to bring up a report, in direct contravention of the Standing Orders, when such a large number of members of the House and of the Committee were absent.

Mr. TANNER called attention to the fact that the Railways Committee were ordered to go on with this petition and come to a decision as quickly as possible, seeing that a large number of men were out of employment, and likely to remain so pending a decision. They had applied to the House more than once for permission to sit during the sitting of the House. They had sat during the sitting of the House that afternoon, and they had come to the conclusion embodied in the report, now presented in order that no further delay should take place, the next sitting-day being Tuesday. Such being the case, he trusted no difficulty would be interposed between these unfortunate men and their chance of getting work.

Mr. SEDDON said, if the honourable member would leave out the latter part of the motion, and merely move that the report be laid on the table, perhaps that would get over the difficulty. Then the question of referring it to the Government could stand over till next

sitting-day. He did not wish to take any advantage at that hour of the morning.

Mr. MITCHELSON objected altogether to the report being received, as it was against the rules of the House.

Dr. NEWMAN moved, That the debate be adjourned.

The House divided.

AYES, 8.

Bell	Mitchelson	<i>Tellers.</i>
McKenzie, J.	Newman	Allen
Mills	Seddon.	Massey.

NOES, 29.

Buddo	Harris	Pirani
Buick	Hogg	Reeves
Cadman	Houston	Smith, E. M.
Carnell	Joyce	Smith, G. J.
Carroll	Maslin	Stevens
Collins	McGowan	Tanner
Flatman	McKenzie, R.	Ward.
Graham	McLachlan	<i>Tellers.</i>
Hall	Meredith	Lawry
Hall-Jones	Pinkerton	Russell, G. W.

PAIRS.

<i>For.</i>	<i>Against.</i>
Duncan	Buchanan
Larnach	Mackenzie, T.
Mackintosh	Te Ao
Montgomery	Russell, W. R.
Morrison	Wilson
Steward.	Green.

Majority against, 21.

Motion for adjournment negatived.

Mr. ALLEN wished to have the ruling of the Speaker upon the question as to whether it was possible to bring on any new business after twelve o'clock without suspending the Standing Orders. He referred to Standing Order 55.

Mr. ACTING-SPEAKER was of opinion that Standing Order 55 did not prohibit the laying of a report on the table. "No order of the day or notice of motion shall be called on after 12 o'clock." That referred, he understood, to what was on the Order Paper before the House. This was not an order of the day or a notice of motion, and, as he had previously said, before the division took place, this Committee had leave to sit during the sitting of the House, and it could present its report any time during the sitting of the House. He ruled that it was competent to lay the report on the table, and refer it to the Government, or refer it back to the Committee.

Mr. MITCHELSON would like the Speaker also to rule as to whether a motion made after twelve o'clock—a motion upon which a debate could take place—was not new business.

Mr. SEDDON said there was no motion necessary, and no notice of motion necessary, when reports were presented. They were simply called on as the Chairman reported them. The presentation of this report was a mere matter of form. There was nothing in the report to cause any trouble or debate that evening.

Mr. PIRANI said that only yesterday evening, after twelve o'clock, the Speaker took a

Mr. Seddon

motion in reference to a decision of his. He offered to take it, and the member proposed to give notice of it for next day.

Mr. ACTING-SPEAKER did not require this matter to be further discussed. He had given his ruling, and adhered to it. He ruled that it was not new business. The question was, "That the report do lie on the table."

Mr. G. W. RUSSELL said he had also moved that it be referred to the Government.

Mr. BELL would move, as an amendment, That the report be referred back to the Committee. Had other members of the Opposition been present the matter would have been debated. He did not accuse the honourable member for Riccarton of bringing up the report at that hour for the purpose of avoiding debate, but if the report were once laid on the table the chance of discussing the motion was gone.

Mr. R. McKENZIE rose to a point of order. He believed the motion had been carried to lay the report on the table.

Mr. ACTING-SPEAKER.—No; the division was taken on the question "That the debate be adjourned," and, that having been negatived, the question is, "That the report do lie on the table, and be referred to the Government."

Mr. BELL had understood the Premier to say that he would be willing to put this matter at the head of the Order Paper next sitting-day, in order that they should not lose their opportunity of discussing it.

Mr. SEDDON said that, in justice to the honourable member for Riccarton, he ought to say that the Committee had ordered that the report should be laid on the table and referred to the Government that day.

Mr. G. W. RUSSELL said, that was so.

Mr. SEDDON said that to refer the report back to the Committee would do no good; but he had no desire to take advantage of the absence of honourable members. He had therefore proposed to compromise the matter by allowing the motion to be simply that the document do lie on the table, so that a separate motion could be made next sitting-day that it should be referred to the Government. He desired to have the report laid on the table, because it then became a public document.

Mr. BELL said, so far as he was concerned, he was prepared to accept that, and he believed that the honourable member for Eden would have accepted the motion of the honourable member for Riccarton if it had been simply that the report do lie on the table, especially with the assurance of the Premier that it would be placed at the head of the Order Paper. He hoped the honourable member for Riccarton would accept that.

Mr. G. W. RUSSELL proposed to accept the suggestion of the Premier; but he considered the imputations of the Opposition had been exceedingly offensive. The position was this: They had been dealing with a dispute relating to a couple of coal companies, and in connection with which mining work had been delayed for weeks, to the detriment of all parties, especially the miners. Concessions

had been made during the investigation to a particular company in the direction honourable gentlemen on the other side desired. Those honourable gentlemen who desired that the report should be referred back, and who were the loudest in their complaints, abstained from taking part in the proceedings of the Committee until it came to dealing with the report. The Committee had sat that afternoon for the purpose of considering their report, and he had had that report in his hands ever since half-past four o'clock p.m., waiting for an opportunity of placing it before the House, and the first opportunity he had of doing so was when the Acting-Speaker took the chair a few moments ago. And then they had the honourable member for Eden standing up and complaining that there was an attempt on that side of the House to act unfairly and unjustly. Was it right that such charges should be made against Chairmen of Committees? The honourable gentleman, when he found he was unable to carry out his own sweet will, stalked out of the Committee-room and would have nothing more to do with it. The Committee, having settled this report, wished to bring it before the House at the earliest possible moment, so that the miners on the West Coast might be settled in their employment. Then the honourable gentleman stood up in the House and said the Chairman of the Committee had no right to take an unfair advantage of his position and of the House. Such statements as that were unjust.

Mr. BELL said he had made no charge against the honourable gentleman, nor did he think the honourable gentleman had intended to take advantage of the Opposition. What he complained of was that, when they said there was a difficulty about the matter, the honourable gentleman pressed on his motion. He thought the honourable gentleman should have given way when he saw the position.

Leave granted to withdraw this part of the motion: "and be referred to the Government."

Motion, as amended, agreed to.

The House adjourned at twenty minutes to two o'clock a.m.

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

Tuesday, 4th September, 1894.

Second Reading—Third Readings—Foundation of the Colony—Shops and Shop-assistants Bill.

The Hon. the SPEAKER took the chair at half-past two o'clock p.m.

PRAYERS.

SECOND READING.

Borough of Oamaru Leasing Bill.

THIRD READINGS.

Invercargill Racecourse Trustees Empowering Bill, Eketahuna Cemetery Reserve Bill, Inangahua County Council Empowering Bill, Mount St. John Reserve Bill, Greymouth

Harbour Board Empowering Bill, Wellington Reclaimed Land Bill.

FOUNDATION OF THE COLONY.

The Hon. Dr. POLLEN.—Sir, the subject-matter of this motion has been before this Council on more than one occasion already. On the first occasion that it was brought up a resolution was adopted that it would be desirable that the date of the celebration of the anniversary of the colony should be altered so as to bring it into accord with the historical fact. The official foundation of the colony took place on the 30th January, whereas the holiday has generally been held upon the 29th. Through inadvertence on my part, the resolution which I have referred to was not submitted, as it ought to have been, in the proper course to have it carried into effect; and so nothing was done. Last year I put the question to the Hon. the Colonial Secretary, asking what was intended to be done in reference to this matter, and I received the answer that, as the matter had then been brought under the notice of the Government, inquiries would be made and action at once taken. In January this year, in Auckland, where a good deal of enthusiasm is generally shown in reference to the celebration of this anniversary, the question of the proper date of the celebration was raised. I thought it proper on that occasion to address to the Colonial Secretary a telegram calling his attention to the fact that this question was being raised. This is what I said:—

"Auckland, 16th December, 1893.

"Hon. Colonial Secretary, Wellington.

"Question of date of anniversary is being raised here (see *New Zealand Herald*, 13th December instant). Hope that 30th January will be fixed as holiday, instead of 29th, and the old official blunder be corrected.

"DANIEL POLLEN, M.L.C., Auckland."

To which I received this reply:—

"Wellington, 20th December, 1893.

"Hon. D. Pollen, Avondale.

"Question of date of Anniversary Day will be considered at first meeting of Cabinet.

"P. A. BUCKLEY."

I subsequently received the following letter:—

"Colonial Secretary's Office,

"Wellington, 24th January, 1894.

"SIR,—Adverting to my telegram of the 20th ultimo, I have the honour to inform you that the Government have decided to refer the question of the anniversary of the colony to a Joint Committee of both Houses of the Legislature to inquire into and determine.—I have, &c.,

"P. A. BUCKLEY.

"The Hon. Dr. Pollen, M.L.C.,

"The Whau, Avondale, Auckland."

I am moving in the matter now, as honourable members perhaps know, with the concurrence and at the instance of the Colonial Secretary, and I assume, if this motion is carried and the Committee is appointed, the Government will take the necessary steps in another

place to appoint a Committee in accordance with the proposal of the Colonial Secretary to which I have just referred. The evidence to be brought before that Committee is very simple and very short. I need refer to it only very cursorily here, inasmuch as the necessary documentary evidence will be produced before the Committee when it is appointed. We have authentic documentary evidence that the official Proclamation of the foundation of the colony was made at Kororareka, Bay of Islands, on the 30th January, 1840. On that occasion, Lieutenant-Governor Hobson having read the Proclamation by the Governor of New South Wales extending the boundaries of that colony so as to include New Zealand, and having read his own commission as Lieutenant-Governor from Her Majesty the Queen, the "flag" was at once run up to the masthead on board Her Majesty's ship "Herald," which was then lying in the harbour at the Bay of Islands, and it received a Royal salute. Whilst the walls and the windows of the little wooden church at Kororareka quaked at the thunder of the guns, a formal *précis* of the event was being signed by forty or fifty persons who were then present. The first anniversary of the colony was not officially celebrated. The seat of Government was then in process of being removed from Russell to Waitemata. There were some social gatherings by which the anniversary at Kororareka was then celebrated. When the second anniversary came round, in 1842, there was a notice issued from the Colonial Secretary's Office, and this notice I hold in my hand. It reads as follows:—

"NOTICE.—Saturday, the 29th instant, being the second anniversary of the establishment of the colony, His Excellency the Governor has been pleased to direct that day to be held a general holiday, on which occasion all the public offices will be closed.—By His Excellency's command.

"WILLOUGHBY SHORTLAND.

"Colonial Secretary's Office,

"Auckland, 27th January, 1842."

If the proper consideration had been given to this case some explanation of the alteration of the day would have been then made. The 30th January, 1840, fell upon a Thursday, and, 1840 being leap-year, the first anniversary necessarily fell upon a Saturday; the second anniversary falling on the Sunday, the notification of a holiday on the day preceding was made by the Colonial Secretary. It was hardly necessary to make any explanation at the time as far as this notification was concerned, because all those persons affected by it were close at hand, and all the circumstances were known to them. But the consequences of the Government's negligence was not foreseen. For five years after that there was no public holiday; the people of New Zealand had "other fish to fry"; there was very small occasion for rejoicing on the part of any portion of New Zealand during those five years. After a time things began to look brighter and better, and in January, 1847, a notification was made that there should be a public holiday in celebra-

tion of the anniversary of the foundation of the colony. In accordance with the usual official routine, reference was made to the first notification of the holiday on the 29th, and it was copied verbatim, as giving the proper date for the anniversary. This was done without even the trouble being taken to rectify the former error. Consequently the anniversary has since been celebrated on this date, the 29th being held as the general holiday, instead of the 30th, as it ought to be. All this can be supported by official documents which leave no room for doubt as to the accuracy of what I have said. I hope, therefore, the result of the appointment of this Committee will be to establish the accuracy of that date which the Council has affirmed should be the date for the anniversary, and that the celebration will thus be brought into accord with historical fact. I therefore move the motion standing in my name.

Motion made, and question proposed, "*That a Select Committee be appointed to inquire into and determine the proper date for the general holiday in anniversary celebration of the foundation of this colony: Committee to consist of the Hon. Sir P. A. Buckley, the Hon. Dr. Grace, the Hon. Mr. Ormond, the Hon. Mr. Stevens, the Hon. Mr. MacGregor, the Hon. Mr. Bonar, and the mover: Committee to have power to confer or to act jointly with any Committee appointed for a similar purpose by the House of Representatives, as proposed by the Colonial Secretary in his letter on this subject under date the 24th January, 1894.*"—(Hon. Dr. POLLEN.)

The Hon. Sir P. A. BUCKLEY.—I am just as anxious as any one to preserve the authentic records of this colony, and I have to thank the Hon. Dr. Pollen for having brought this question to a climax, and I hope we may be able to arrive at some definite result. The Hon. Dr. Pollen introduced the subject-matter of this motion on a former occasion, and I thought it would probably be the duty of the Government to define the question and set it beyond the reach of controversy. I therefore suggested to my honourable friend that a Joint Committee should be set up to take evidence on the point, and I requested the Premier to give a similar notice in another place. I hope that, with the efforts of the Joint Committee, we may be able to arrive at the exact date of the anniversary of the colony. In reading over the names mentioned in my honourable friend's motion I thought they were sufficient, but, looking round this Council, I notice gentlemen—not so much amongst the newer members of the Council as amongst the older ones—who are, probably, more in a position to settle this matter. I would suggest to my honourable friend that he should amend his motion by adding the names of the Hon. Mr. Mantell and the Hon. Mr. Williams, who have been connected with the colony, I might say, from the year one. I therefore suggest the addition of these two names, and I think probably we shall then arrive at a satisfactory result.

The Hon. Dr. POLLEN.—I have no objec-

Hon. Dr. Pollen

tion to any alteration the Council may wish to make. I have endeavoured to so arrange the Committee that any expression of opinion on the subject may be as general as possible.

The Hon. Mr. MANTELL.—I hope my name will not be added to the Committee, because I am thoroughly convinced on the point already, and nothing can alter the evidence which the Hon. Dr. Pollen has on more than one occasion placed before the Council. I think that evidence is sufficient to show that the date Her Majesty's sovereignty was actually proclaimed in New Zealand is the date of the anniversary of the colony. There is nothing at all to be ascertained about it. It merely requires action to be taken by the Government, and I hope my name will not be added, because I am on all-fours with the Hon. Dr. Pollen in the matter.

Names of the Hon. Mr. Mantell and the Hon. Mr. Williams added.

Motion agreed to.

SHOPS AND SHOP-ASSISTANTS BILL.

The Hon. Sir P. A. BUCKLEY.—In moving the second reading of this Bill, I may say that the subject-matter of the Bill has been before the Council on more than one occasion. On the first occasion it received the favourable consideration of the Council, and became law in very nearly the same shape in which it was presented to us; but on the second occasion a hostile motion moved by my honourable friend opposite was carried, and the Bill was thrown out. We have had the measure under consideration so often—and it has been referred to the Labour Bills Committee, and evidence taken for and against it so often—that it is unnecessary for me to speak at any length upon it. It has been found that the measure as it at present stands on the statute-book is practically a dead-letter. It is proposed in this Bill that the half-holiday shall not be permissible but compulsory, and shall be given to every shop-assistant in the colony on a certain day in the week. It also provides for ventilation and sanitary requirements in those places in which these men have to spend the greater part of their time. There is at present great difficulty in enforcing the regulations, and it is proposed that the Inspector shall have the same powers as Inspectors under the Factory Act. I know that this measure will receive from one member of this Council not the most favourable consideration, and therefore when I have to reply to my honourable friend I may be in a position, perhaps, to answer satisfactorily to the Council any objections which he may make to the Bill. With the exception of one clause to which I have referred, there is nothing further to explain than what is now the law. I therefore move, *That this Bill be now read the second time.*

The Hon. Mr. SWANSON.—Sir, if the description of the Bill we have had from the Hon. the Attorney-General is a fair description of it, then I can most heartily support it. But I understand it goes a great deal further. If it is to provide for giving a holiday to shop-assist-

ants I do not know that the Council can offer very much objection to it. But if I read the Bill aright it goes a good deal further, for it provides that those people who are carrying on shops themselves shall shut up their shops in order that the assistants in other shops may go and play. If the description we have had of the Bill is a right one I shall certainly vote for it—that is, if it is not to apply to those who carry on business themselves with the assistance of their families only, but allows them to carry on their business as they are doing now.

The Hon. Sir G. S. WHITMORE.—The honourable member has just alluded to the real cause of this Bill being thrown out on several occasions. The fact is, it appeared to the Council to be very unjust and arbitrary that a person who kept his own shop by means of the help of his family should have his business suspended in order to secure that those persons who have assistants should give them half-holidays—there being a possibility that they would run a successful opposition against them. It was really a question of the small people against the great, and the small people could only hope to be protected by this Council, and it was this Council that did protect them. This, however, is one of the Bills that have been before the country, and, unjust as it is, I am bound to say I do not know how we can take a different course on this occasion from that taken in other instances in which these rejected labour Bills have come before us. But that does not apply to the things which were not in the old Bill but which are in this new one. I want to know upon what ground the definition of a shop is made to include hotels which are properly licensed. These institutions are for the accommodation of man and beast, for travellers as well as for their horses, and closing their bars practically ruins them. And we have this monstrous thing: that, because assistants of certain shops in town are to have a half-holiday, we are to close these houses, to the great discomfort of travellers, and to the inconvenience of persons living in hotels all over the country. I cannot see what connection there is one with the other. I admit that the country has agreed to the principle that five and a half days' work for shop-assistants shall be a week's work, and I presume the thing will find its own level. They will be paid for their time, perhaps by the hour, and when that is the case there will be no great injustice, though there will be still great inconvenience caused to the public. But I should like to know on what grounds the hotels of the colony are to be included in this Bill. They are not in any sense shops, or places where many shop-assistants are employed, for the servants live on the premises; and the general public is largely interested in maintaining them in an efficient condition. I think that we in this Council ought to strike that definition out. Then, although sanitation is very proper, and a great deal is to be said for it—it is no doubt very necessary—I want to ask the honourable gentlemen who will sit in judgment on the Bill in the Labour Bills Committee to give a little atten-

tion to one or two of the provisions in these sanitation clauses, chiefly in the Factories Act. I do not wish to go into them—they are not savoury subjects; but I wish to point out that a lady and her two daughters may constitute a factory, and in institutions where there are nothing but women, and where limited space is at the disposal of those persons who are working, why they should be subjected to some of the provisions which, it will be seen, are provided I cannot tell. I do not wish further to discuss that; but I have made a suggestion which I hope will be attended to. Now, I have nothing else to say, because, in the main, this is a question which has been before the country, and we may judge by the vote of the country that it has been approved of. The responsibility, at all events, is taken off our shoulders. The Council has done its utmost, within the proper limits of its functions, to protect the small struggling trader; but we have been overborne, and the masters of the country have shown that they have, in this instance, reversed their usual judgment, which is to treat as criminals those persons who possess property of any kind. In this country people of that class alone are hounded down generally; but in this case there is the ordinary vulgar and very natural contempt for poor persons shown. According to the provisions of this Bill, poor persons who are struggling along—say, a man and his wife, keeping a little tobacco-nist's shop—are to have their shops shut up, to the advantage of the larger institutions employing, say, thirty, forty, or a hundred workpeople. Well, it is so. The Council can do no more; I am sorry we cannot; but I do not think we can consistently take any other course, after the manner in which we have dealt with other Bills. But, as regards the definition of the word "shop," I beg to say that, if the Labour Bills Committee cannot see their way to recommend the excision of that, I shall test the opinion of the Council upon it when the Bill comes back.

The Hon. Mr. REYNOLDS.—I quite agree with a great deal of what has been said by the Hon. Sir George Whitmore. I consider this one of the worst Bills that could be introduced into this Council. There is not the least necessity for it; and, if there were, if it was necessary to do something, I should say it should be left to the local body to decide by means of a poll of the citizens. It seems to me that this is an Act quite opposite to anything like self-government. If the citizens in any particular borough wish to have a half-holiday once a week, let them have a poll and state on what day they wish that half-holiday to be observed. If they are opposed to it they will say so at the poll. We are here not to legislate on behalf of shopkeepers and shop-assistants only, but also on behalf of the general public. Such being the case, we should leave it to the general public to decide the question for themselves as to whether they desire to have a half-holiday weekly or not. A mere permissive Bill would, I think, have been an advantage; but this Bill does not carry out my views at all, and,

Hon. Sir G. S. Whitmore

if no one else does so, I shall move that it be read a second time this day six months. There are many objections to the Bill as it stands, in addition to my primary objection. In clause 2, for example, you preclude any one from opening his or her shop, even if he or she employs no shop-assistants.

The Hon. Sir P. A. BUCKLEY.—It is clear you have not read the Bill.

The Hon. Mr. REYNOLDS.—It is clear I have read the Bill, and have studied it over and over again—I think, a little more than the honourable member who is addressing me. Further, it states that no one can keep a shop open on the day that is proclaimed a half-holiday. That is stated distinctly. Now, suppose a case of a widow woman fighting her way in order to earn sufficient to support her fatherless children. She is not allowed to open her shop on the half-holiday, although it may be of great consequence to her to keep open during six days of the week instead of five and a half. She is not allowed to keep open on the half-holiday; and why? Not because she will be depriving any employé of a half-holiday, but because she would keep open simply because she prefers by doing so to provide the means to support her young family. Then, again, there is a provision here, in subsection (3) of section 2, which says that "shop-assistant" means any person or any member of the shopkeeper's family who works in a shop for wages or maintenance. Supposing a widow woman keeping a shop has a son or daughter who sometimes runs into the shop and sells a pennyworth of needles or pins, or anything else. Why should they not be allowed to do that because they are maintained by their mother? Then, in another section—section 7—I see provision is made that a steamer, ship, or boat "arriving to depart therefrom within twelve hours after arrival" may be supplied. I think that should be struck out, if the measure is to become law, because it is just possible that a vessel might come into port having sustained considerable damage, and not be able to leave again in twelve hours, and possibly in need of immediate supplies. Why, it appears to me absurd to say that unless the vessel leaves again within twelve hours she cannot be supplied. I cannot understand the value of such a proposal. Section 9, I think, ought to be struck out altogether, and if it comes before the Council in Committee I shall certainly move that the section be struck out. I say we should take a poll of the citizens to ascertain if they want a half-holiday, and, if so, allow them to fix the day on which it is to be held. The principal objection I have is to this forcing upon the public an enactment which may not be wanted. I do not believe, if a poll were taken in any borough in the colony, there would be a majority in favour of a weekly half-holiday. Upon these grounds, I shall oppose this Bill, and I move, *That the Bill be read the second time this day six months.*

The Hon. Mr. SHRIMSKI.—I have very much pleasure in supporting the amendment

moved by the Hon. Mr. Reynolds. I at one time thought I was a Liberal; but, if this is Liberalism,—the manner this Bill has been introduced, and its contents,—then I am no longer a Liberal.

The Hon. Sir P. A. BUCKLEY.—Are you a Tory?

The Hon. Mr. SHRIMSKI.—Yes, to the very backbone. My friends do not believe in that name, but the Bill as it is framed now is a very harsh and arbitrary measure, and will affect a large proportion of the community to their great disadvantage. I do not speak for the sake of speaking, but I have been in business, and I therefore speak with a certain amount of knowledge, and I say that this Bill affects to a very material extent the well-being and welfare of a great number of the community. I may be told that I am wandering beyond the question in referring to the Labour Bills Committee, but I am sorry to say that the boycotting system which originated in Ireland has found its way into the New Zealand Parliament, and that I am boycotted—that I am not put upon the Committee—because I am opposed to certain measures. Well, Sir, that fact will not change my opinion. I shall adhere to the opinion I hold, and I am going to criticize the measure as far as I can without trying to say more than is necessary. In the first place, in regard to licensed houses, under clause 2, I notice hotel bars are included. Now, this Council has always been very careful with regard to retrospective laws. Licenses have been issued by the various Licensing Committees throughout the colony from a certain date to a certain date, prescribing during what hours business shall be carried on, when the hotels shall be opened, and when shut; and are we, subsequently, to pass a retrospective law affecting the interests of these licensed holders, and compelling them to close their bars on half-holidays? If that law is to be carried out, then those who are affected adversely by it will no doubt have a claim against the State for compensation for issuing licenses to them granting certain privileges, and then subsequently taking from the holders their means of living by compelling them to shut at certain times. It seems to me to be a very unjust thing to propose, and the result would be, not only that we should prevent hotel-keepers from earning a living, but that great inconvenience would be caused to the public, and visitors coming to this colony would be deprived of those comforts and conveniences which the law formerly provided for them. Why should the public be compelled to shut on the half-holiday? I do not object to people shutting their shops who are generous enough to give their assistants a holiday, but I say it is cruel and wrong to starve a lot of poor people, who will be compelled to shut up their shops and so deprive their children of bread. I think this is going altogether too far. As I have said, I see no objection to people having a holiday, provided they do not interfere with the rights and liberties of other people; but I much regret to see the people of New

Zealand are bartering away the liberties God has created them to enjoy. If they had the same experience of liberty that I have had, very likely they would not be so eager to dispose of it. But what we are doing at the present time is done by a lot of agitators, and is not for the public good, or in accordance with the public will; but a lot of agitators, who were trying to get into the House, are forcing measures like this upon the community. The population of this colony, as I have said on a former occasion, is somewhere about seven hundred thousand, and the people employed in the shops throughout the colony are only 1 per cent. of that population—that is to say, six thousand nine hundred are employed throughout the colony; and are 99 per cent. of the population to have the commodities they desire to purchase increased in price, and are they to be subjected to the inconvenience of having the shops closed when they require to go to them, in order to give the 1 per cent. a half-holiday? I do not think that we ought to be compelled to do that for the 1 per cent., and to have the 99 per cent. inconvenienced, and to have the commodities increased in price.

An Hon. MEMBER.—One per cent. of the adult population.

The Hon. Mr. SHRIMSKI.—I said 1 per cent. of the population, and, as to adults, most of those employed in shops are boys and girls. If my friend wants an answer I can give him one. I think the time has come when we should put a stop to this sort of Liberalism, when we are trying to injure those whom it is our duty to protect. It is for us to promote the welfare of the people; and here we are trying, if we possibly can, to put some of them on the Benevolent Institute. In the course of a conversation within the precincts of this building yesterday, an honourable member said that it was far better to put people on the Benevolent Institute than to allow them to carry on business in that way, when they were just earning sufficient to live on. But I say that these people have been hitherto self-reliant and independent, and that which we are doing will make them indolent, careless, and a burden on the community. I shall have much pleasure in supporting the amendment, and I hope my honourable friend will be successful in carrying it.

The Hon. Mr. BOLT.—I am exceedingly sorry to hear the Hon. Mr. Shrimski say that he was once a Liberal and that now he has fallen from grace. He is not the first man who has been unfortunate in that way; but I certainly refuse to believe that he has been boycotted by this Council in consequence of his lapse into sin. I feel sure the Council would not do anything of the sort. With regard to the Bill, I may say the very provisions which have been taken exception to by the Hon. Mr. Shrimski, Sir George Whitmore, and other gentlemen are the provisions which I think give the measure backbone and virtue. We have tried the voluntary system long enough, and we find that it cannot work, and, if it cannot work, then we require a compulsory Bill;

and, if we require such a Bill, would it not be very unfair to compel a man who is employing, say, a lad to shut his shop, while another alongside of him, where there is no lad employed, should be allowed to keep open and enjoy all the trade? That, I think, would be a very unfair attitude to take up. Therefore, when one comes to examine the question, there is no doubt that if the country is going to have a Bill at all it must be a Bill that applies to the whole community. I must say I do not think this Bill is going to settle the question. This question will never be really settled until Saturday afternoon is declared by statute to be the weekly half-holiday. The Bill does not do that, and to that extent it is not a final settlement of the question. There is, I may say, a growing consensus of opinion all over the colony that Saturday afternoon is the proper time to have a half-holiday upon. In Auckland, as honourable members know, a large number, if not a majority, of the retail dealers have declared in favour of the Saturday half-holiday; and in the South, from my own knowledge, I am convinced that this opinion is gaining in strength.

An Hon. MEMBER.—Not at all.

The Hon. Mr. BOLT.—Yes, it is so, and I do not think one need be surprised at that when one comes to examine the reasons in favour of the Saturday half-holiday. The truth is that these reasons are overwhelming as against any other day, while the objections to the Saturday are trivial in the extreme, and really, in many cases, spring from selfish motives, and come from an exceedingly small number of traders. I believe all those traders who object to the Saturday half-holiday, had they given the same energy to endeavouring to suit themselves to the new condition as they have to opposing it, would have found that they could keep the half-holiday on Saturday without the least inconvenience to themselves or to anybody else. The reasons, I may say, in favour of the Saturday half-holiday are mainly four. There are a good many, but I think they may be included under four heads or general grounds. The first is that already a large number of business people now close on Saturday afternoon; the next is that the Saturday afternoon half-holiday does not break the continuity of the week's work; the next is that the means of recreation and enjoyment are more complete for everybody when there is a uniform day; and the fourth is that the schools on that day close, and that the children can enjoy the half-holiday with their parents, and under the supervision of their parents. If we are going to have a half-holiday at all, I say, for these reasons, Saturday is the proper day on which to have it. I may just enumerate what establishments now close on Saturday. In the first place, there are the banks, shipping agencies, insurance companies, commission agencies, all sorts of bonds, warehouses, wholesale businesses of all kinds, Customs, railway goods-sheds, and a great number of retail dealers. All these close now, and all the mechanical trades also close on Saturday after-

noon; and if it was decided that the half-holiday should be on Saturday a great number of those who do not close now would be willing to close if all others did so. The consequence is, if you look at it in that light, you will find what I say to be true—that the objectors to this measure are really confined to a very few traders, and those in second-rate shops. The Saturday half-holiday would best suit all parties concerned, because if we close on that day the small trader will not be at all affected. The volume of trade will be the same—it will only be done at a different time. But what I maintain is this: that, in order to make the Saturday half-holiday effective, there should be a late night on Friday: wages should be paid every Friday or Thursday, and extra facilities should be given by the Railway Department to country people to come to town on Thursdays or Fridays, in order to get their business done. If these things were carried out, along with other smaller matters which will no doubt present themselves to honourable gentlemen's minds, there would be no difficulty in carrying on the Saturday half-holiday; and I think there has been far too much made of the difficulties in connection with it. The importance of a uniform day, of course, I need not speak of, because honourable gentlemen will know that if there is a holiday it is wise that provision should be made for railway excursions, picnics, and so on, so that people may really enjoy the leisure they have received, which cannot be done if only half the people are holiday-making and the other half are working. Provisions for enjoyment are always more complete if the day is uniformly observed as a holiday by the whole community. And, on Saturday, as I have pointed out, the children are home from school, and they also would enjoy the holiday along with their parents, and under their parents' supervision. In that case it is an advantage for all concerned. Then, there is no breach in the week's work: it is carried on in a proper way; and the result is that all will enjoy a holiday as a civilised community should. We should not have relays of work—one lot working when the others are having their holiday—but we should work together and play together, as people in civilised communities ought to do. With regard to the Bill, a great deal has been said of what took place last session regarding a similar measure. I remember what took place. There were a great many doleful, foreboding, and dismal prognostications of what would take place if this Bill became law. Now, I do not think honourable gentlemen here are justified in taking up a Cassandra-like attitude of that sort. I do not think we are called upon to express opinions of a melancholy character such as that, but to remember that we are here to carry out the wishes of the people. The people know what they want just as well as any number of gentlemen who may be put into this Council; and what we are here for is to give legislative shape and form to the desires of the people, when we see they require it. I maintain that the people do re-

Hon. Mr. Bolt

quire it, notwithstanding what has been said. When you come to look at the number of people who are now enjoying the half-holiday, including the working-classes, I have no hesitation in saying that, if a poll were taken of the people in New Zealand as to whether they would have the half-holiday, there would be a three-fourths majority in favour of it—at any rate, in favour of it on some day of the week.

An Hon. MEMBER.—In the towns.

The Hon. Mr. BOLT.—This Bill does not affect the country so far as country pursuits are concerned, unless it chooses to come under the Act. The country has not formed a hasty judgment on this question. It has been submitted to the people especially in the towns; I admit, certainly, not very much in the country, because people in the country do not so much require it as in the towns. I maintain that this question has been discussed for years and years. It has been discussed, to my knowledge, in Dunedin for the last twenty-five years, and it is only now that we are getting this class of legislation taken up by the people. The fact is, the principle of *laissez faire* which this Council is always contending for has kept back this question, as it has kept back every other question to which this principle has been applied—this principle which lies at the root of all anarchy, and which, when it is not useless, as in this case, is criminal and destructive. With regard to the Saturday half-holiday, I do not object to giving the people the choice proposed—namely, to give the local body the power of fixing what day shall be observed for closing. If the local bodies say that the day shall be some other day in the week than Saturday, I think it would be wise to give the right to those people who now close on Saturday, and any others who may desire to do so, to close on that day if they so wish, and I would certainly vote for making it optional within those limits. I trust the Bill will be altered before it passes through the Labour Bills Committee—and I presume it will be—and a provision to that effect put in the Bill. I hope the Bill will pass the second reading, and that the Council will not attempt again to burke the question. As the Hon. Sir George Whitmore said, all the policy Bills of the Government have been before the country, and have been judged by the country, and this Bill has been judged as much as any other. Therefore I think it is our duty to pass it.

The Hon. W. DOWNIE STEWART.—Legislation on this subject, I think, must be gradual; but we have already on the statute-book an Act which I am bound to confess has not been successful. My experience in Dunedin has been that certain shops close on one day and that other shops close on another day, and there is a general disarrangement of business in various ways arising from that. Many employes are dissatisfied, simply because they find that one shop observes the half-holiday on one day and another shop on another. The arguments of the honourable gentleman who has just spoken, looked at from one point of view, are rather against his own contention

when he suggests that there should be a close and uniform half-holiday—that is to say, that the shopkeepers shall all observe the same half-holiday. Well, of course, that is one way of looking at it—from the mere point of expediency; but it is another question as to how it would work out in business, because when these mechanics and others are not employed they go about shopping, and the shops are there to meet their convenience and give them opportunity of visiting them, whereas they would not have that opportunity if all the shops were closed at the time they are free.

An Hon. MEMBER.—Let there be a late night.

The Hon. W. DOWNIE STEWART.—That is a point I shall refer to. This Bill states, in clause 11,—

“A woman, or a person under eighteen years of age, shall not work for hire or maintenance in or about any shop, nor at any work in connection with the shop, for a longer period than fifty-eight hours, including meal-times, in any one week, nor for a longer period than ten hours and a half, including meal-times, in any one day.”

With that restriction, I understand that a late night cannot be kept, as the shops would have to close practically at the same hour.

An Hon. MEMBER.—They could have two sets of servants.

The Hon. W. DOWNIE STEWART.—If one were not allowed to work a given time the others could not do so. This is a subject which has been agitating a certain section of the people in Dunedin, and is doing so at present a great deal. It is said that if this Bill is passed they will be compelled to close their shops, and, there being no late night in the week,—the honourable member proposes a uniform night,—if this is carried out, then there will be no opportunity given to these people to shop at all. I think the better course is to allow this Bill to go to the Labour Bills Committee, and have it altered in such a way as would meet the justice of the case. Another question arises in connection with clause 7, which states,—

“It shall not be deemed an offence against the provisions of this Act if a shopkeeper employ any person or keep open his shop at a port after the prescribed time of closing merely for the purpose of supplying goods to any ship, steamer, or boat arriving at such port, if such ship, steamer, or boat depart therefrom within twelve hours after arrival.”

How is the person who supplies goods to the ship to know if the vessel will sail within twelve hours of her arrival? It seems to me that this clause would mean prohibition, because a man could not tell that the vessel would leave within twelve hours. The word “shop-assistant,” in the definition in this Bill, “includes any person or any member of the shopkeeper's family who works in a shop for hire or maintenance”; and under section 15, if a man happens to have his daughter in his shop attending it, she must be allowed a full hour for dinner. She probably will not know what to do with herself during that time. I

think that in the case of large shops it might do very well, but I do not know how it will work out in cases where the shop is attended to by a mother and her daughter. One great disadvantage in connection with this Bill I wish to call attention to. Section 9 only applies where there is any common ground, as it were, between two boroughs, and I do not think it applies to independent boroughs, but only where there is neutral ground between two boroughs. The clause states, "The Council of every city or borough and the Town Board of every town district having any boundary or part of a boundary in common." That, I apprehend, would not apply to two independent boroughs whose jurisdiction would be confined to their own limits, and I do not see very well how we can prevent suburban boroughs from keeping open their shops on the day the city people would close. It seems to me the Bill requires careful consideration, and I think it is somewhat drastic in some of its provisions. With regard to the remark of the last speaker, that there should be a late night for these town people, a further alteration will have to be made. Probably the better course would be to prevent their opening in the morning, and allow them to keep open at night.

The Hon. Mr. MACGREGOR.—I was glad to hear the admission just made by the Hon. Mr. Stewart to the effect that the Act now on the statute-book has proved a failure. That is precisely what others who supported the Bill last session said then, and on that occasion my honourable friend Mr. Stewart strenuously asserted that the present Act had proved satisfactory. It is a matter of opinion, and, at any rate, it is my opinion that the present Act has proved a failure; and I am prepared to say this: that if we cannot pass some such Act as is here proposed, and if we cannot make some improvement upon the present statute-law upon this subject, I think it would be infinitely better for us to wipe it out altogether. I am inclined to doubt whether it was expedient for us ever to have touched it at all; but I admit that this is one of the policy measures of the Government upon which there has been a distinct and emphatic opinion expressed on the part of the country.

The Hon. Mr. OLIVER.—No, no.

The Hon. Mr. MACGREGOR.—Here again we have a matter of opinion, and I am simply stating my own opinion, and in that opinion I have been confirmed during the lapse of time by my own observation. But, whether it is so or not, we have now on the statute-book a measure providing for a half-holiday to employes in shops, and the effect of the statute in operation has been found to be that either shops must be closed altogether on one half-day in the week or a large number of extra hands must be employed in the large shops so that the employes may have the half-holiday. That has been found to be exceedingly oppressive and exceedingly objectionable to masters, and of very little advantage to their servants. I am not at all satisfied that anything like a satisfactory

Bill can be framed, and the Bill as we have it here is not satisfactory, because it contains many objectionable features. One of the main objections has been pointed out by the Hon. Mr. Stewart—as to the difficulty in a city like Dunedin or Auckland, which is surrounded by suburbs, having one closing-day for the suburbs and another for the city. An attempt has been made in section 9 of this Bill to make provision for meeting such cases, but I am afraid that clause, if passed into law as it stands, would be unworkable. It seems to me that a very much simpler method must be devised if this is to be made workable. The provisions in section 9 will, I am quite sure, be found absolutely unworkable, and simpler provisions must be made for cities, boroughs, and town districts within a certain area, such as the area in the Factories Act, and to constitute the district which is to appoint delegates under this Bill. If the question of the day for the compulsory half-holiday were left for the shopkeepers to decide, then, where the majority was found to be in favour of one particular day, that day could be made compulsory by Order in Council. Then, as to the provision restricting the hours of labour of women and young people under eighteen years of age, I am quite sure that provision, and the similar provision in the Factories Bill, will be found unworkable, and will be found to be a great blot upon both Bills. If anything of the sort were enacted the result would be that the trade in factories and shops would be interfered with to such an extent as to make the Act intolerable. There is another point, and one which has not been touched on during the discussion on this Bill. There are, as we know, a large number of shops that have factories attached to them as auxiliaries—such as tailoring-shops, bootmaking-shops, and others. Now, under the Factories Act, if these workshops must be closed on Saturday, and if this Bill passes, we shall have this anomaly: that one part of the establishment must be kept closed, and the other part may be opened. For instance, we shall have a man closing his shop on the Thursday and his factory on the Saturday; and as no provision is made to meet that case it will be found absolutely necessary to provide for it in the event of any other day than Saturday being taken for the half-holiday under the Shop-hours Bill. Provision must be made for shops and factories being closed on the same day. As to the undesirableness of the present Act, I am convinced that there can be very little difference of opinion, and, as I have said, I confess, for my own part, that it would have been infinitely better if the subject had never been touched.

The Hon. Mr. OLIVER.—I wish to say very few words. This is another Bill designed to go one step further forward in the direction of dragooning the population of this colony. This Bill is an endeavour to interfere in what it is better to leave to individual action. For my part, I think that, if we desire to insist upon shop-assistants having a half-holiday, no better means could be devised than giving the employers the choice of the half-day which would

Hon. W. Downie Stewart

be the most convenient to them. The desire on the part of the shop-assistants seems to be to have their holiday all on the same day, so that they may be able to avail themselves of the means of travelling and of amusement which would probably be more fully offered to them if the same half-day were universal. It is said that this Bill is one of the policy Bills of the Government, and that, the people's approval having been given, it should be passed. I am not disposed to contradict that. I think, as the mandate of the people has been given to this Government to a very large extent, it is not my duty to stand in the way of the people obtaining their wishes, or what appear to be their wishes. But I rise for the purpose of making these few remarks in order to prevent my vote from being misunderstood. I shall give my vote against the amendment which has been moved, but my vote will not be given against it because I approve of this Bill. I disapprove of it entirely; and I agree with the view of the Hon. Mr. MacGregor, as just expressed, that this is a subject which ought not to be legislated upon at all. Some people have said that the policy of the Council in reference to these measures ought to be to pass the measures just as they are introduced, and let the community feel the weight of improper legislation. Well, for my part I cannot agree with that, because it seems to me that the Council has a duty to perform; and, although we may thoroughly disapprove of some of the measures which we feel obliged to pass, yet we ought to do our best to lessen the evils which may flow from them. That being the case, I think the Bill ought to be amended in some of its particulars as suggested.

The Hon. Mr. RIGG.—I am glad to see that this measure is being treated more seriously than the one which came before us last year. On that occasion there was very little debate, and the same amendment which has now been moved was moved then, and it proved fatal to the measure. It was a sort of legerdemain business—"Now you see it and now you don't"—and the Bill was gone. Still, I trust that this amendment will not be carried, and for the reason that this Bill stands on exactly the same footing as other measures which have been discussed already by the Council, and which we have determined to pass because they have been before the country. The Hon. Mr. Swanson was quite right in pointing out that the Bill provides for the compulsory closing of shops; and that is just what is required. We have already a law in force—since 1892—which provides that shop-assistants shall have a half-holiday one day in the week—and the honourable gentleman who introduced the Bill told us that that Act has been a failure. Well, I do not agree with him. It may have proved a partial failure. As far as the larger establishments are concerned, at any rate in Wellington, they have faithfully observed it. We have had the compulsory half-holiday; and the object now is to make its operation more equitable. It is desired by this measure to close the shops, and this seems to me to be

perfectly right. The Act of 1892 has had a fair trial, and it has worked unsatisfactorily. Its effect has been to favour the smaller shopkeepers at the expense of the larger ones, which is not just. The large shops throughout the colony have suffered simply on account of the fact that there was not a provision made in the Act of 1892 to compel all to close on a particular day. We have been told about the poor women and the poor widows and children who will suffer if this Bill is passed, owing to their having to close their shops upon a certain day. It seems to me these poor women and children who depend for their living on keeping small shops are very like Falstaff's men in buckram. If we were to take the trouble to make inquiry, we should find that there are not many poor widows with children keeping shops, but we should find instead an increased number of Chinamen. Walk down the main streets here, and what do you see every hundred yards? The yellow face of a dirty Chinaman peeping out from behind the window.

The Hon. W. DOWNIE STEWART.—Who supports them?

The Hon. Mr. RIGG.—I do not. I know they are supported by some people because they sell cheaper. If it were the poor widows and their children who reaped any advantage from the existing law, I should not be so anxious to see the shops closed; but, as it is, there are a large number of storekeepers who give their assistants holidays, give them better conditions in every shape and form, and yet they are compelled to close their shops while a foreign and undesirable people are enabled to keep open, and take away their business. Clause 9 of this Bill provides that the day shall be left to the local authority. Now, this provision is extremely unsatisfactory to me, because it provides that different classes of shops may be closed on different days, and then, as though this was not sufficient, in the next paragraph it provides that the day on which shops of a certain class are to be closed may be changed if the day already fixed is found to be an inconvenient one. Supposing this Bill became law without alteration, the effect would be this: that you would never know on what particular day any class of shop was going to be open. If they opened on a certain day in the week now, there would be no certainty as to the day on which the same class of shop would be open a month hence. Could anything prove more unworkable or absurd? I quite go with those who hold that the day on which the shops should be closed is Saturday. I am quite satisfied in my own mind that, no matter how much we tinker with this question, ultimately we shall have to decide that the compulsory half-holiday shall be on Saturday, and on no other day. It precedes Sunday, the proper day of rest—I may say the natural day of rest. It gives a man who has this holiday an opportunity of enjoying its fullest advantage; whereas, if you give the holiday in the middle of the week, it simply unsettles him for the remainder of the week. It is only those who have had holidays in the middle of the week,

and worked on piecework, as I have myself, who know the effects of such holidays. That being so, if it is unsatisfactory to a piece-hand—if he finds he cannot do justice to himself, if he finds that his earnings decrease through this break in the middle of the week—surely it must also be detrimental to the same extent to the interest of employers where the employés are paid weekly. That is the reason, I believe, that we find the majority of shopkeepers favour the Saturday half-holiday. The other day I took the trouble myself to ascertain the feeling of a large number of the shopkeepers in the city, and, without any exception, they were in favour of closing on the Saturday. In one case I was surprised myself to find that it was so, because the employer I spoke to has a large hair-dressing establishment, and yet he said it would not affect his business nor be inconvenient to his customers that the establishment should be closed on that day. I think, therefore, it would be well if the Council should redraft this provision, and provide for a compulsory half-holiday on the Saturday, and so have done with the matter once and for all. The Hon. Sir George Whitmore referred to the fact that hotel bars were to be closed. I do not think that requires any very serious consideration. It is simply another instance of prohibition run mad, and as such it should be dealt with. The very time that a man wants a drink, the very time he enjoys a drink, is when he has got a holiday. A man does not want drinks when he is working. In fact, the best workmen do not drink during working-hours or on working-days; but when they go out for a holiday with their friends, that is the very time they do drink, because one asks another, and it is good feeling and friendship that prompts the invitation, and a desire to be sociable. To close hotel bars the very days when they would be most required would be absurd. I will not trouble the Council by saying anything further. I trust honourable members will see their way to at any rate pass the second reading of the measure, and leave it to us to do the best we can to make it a just measure in its passage through Committee.

The Hon. Mr. KERR.—I have very little to say on this question. No doubt it is a difficult matter to bring in a Bill like this to please everybody. It is almost impossible. It is like the Licensing Bill—it pleases no one. Certainly this Bill has been before the Council on previous occasions; but the subsection of clause 2 in reference to publichouses has never been before the Council on any occasion. I consider that, instead of this Bill having a clause like that in it, if it was really desired to effect an alteration in the law it should have appeared in the Licensing Bill. The Licensing Bill is certainly the proper place to insert this clause. I wonder very much that this came to be inserted at all. When we consider that those who hold publicans' licenses have already taken out licenses under certain conditions, and that they have paid a certain amount for the licenses they hold, I think we shall see that to take away part of their revenue by closing

their bars on certain days would be un-English and unfair. So far as the half-holiday is concerned, I believe—in common, I think, with a large majority of the population—that Saturday is the proper day for the half-holiday, and that it should be compulsory. As has been instanced by the Hon. Mr. Bolt, nearly all the trades, the foundries, the banks, warehouses, and manufactories close at present on Saturday afternoons; and, seeing that that is the case, I believe the great majority of the people are in favour of the Saturday half-holiday. I do not know why in certain clauses women are treated exceptionally. I see they are under one of the clauses to be compelled to work ten hours a day. It says that a woman or girl under eighteen years of age shall work fifty-eight hours in the week, including time for refreshment. Well, it goes on further to state that half an hour shall be allowed for refreshments, and that it must be every five hours. One can readily see that that means five hours' work in the morning and five in the afternoon, with half an hour for refreshments. That is the position women will occupy. I am quite in sympathy, Sir, with those shopkeepers who have acted fairly and have kept the half-holiday up to the present time. As has been instanced by the Hon. Mr. Rigg, people who keep a respectable class of shops, and have given their assistants a half-holiday, have had their trade taken away by unscrupulous persons and Chinamen. I consider that if we can shut up the Chinamen from competing with Europeans it is our duty to do so. I do not think they deserve any consideration as being good colonists or as supporting families in the colony; their case is quite different from that of a poor widow with children. Another thing that should be remembered is that the small shopkeepers are not altogether handicapped; they are not out of the race in competition. Ordinarily the larger retail shops close at a certain hour in the evening, probably at six or seven, while the people who keep the smaller shops keep open till ten or eleven o'clock at night. Altogether, I think that to have the half-holiday on Saturday would be the best appreciated and the more popular policy, and would be superior to any other arrangement that could be made. In one clause it is provided that the Borough Councils or Town Councils shall state the day to be kept as a half-holiday, and the same section gives them power to make a second half-holiday,—to allow of certain places of business having another day for their half-holiday. Well, that would scarcely be workable, I fancy. I join with those members who approve of the principle of the measure. I shall support its second reading, and will endeavour, if possible, to assist members of this Council in striking out and amending many of the clauses, so as to, in my opinion, make it work better.

The Hon. Mr. PHARAZYN.—During the course of this debate I have been chiefly struck by one fact, which is this: that the extreme anxiety to give the shop-assistants a holiday seems to have entirely obliterated from my

Hon. Mr. Rigg

honourable friends' minds the fact that in giving them this holiday you impose a very considerably greater amount of work upon other classes of the population. For instance, it was remarked in the most cheerful manner that the railways ought to run on all possible occasions, and I presume the tram-cars, and so forth. Of course publichouses ought to be kept open, in order to make the holiday pleasant. I suppose the shop-assistants will not object to that. I think it quite proper that a portion of the population should help the others to enjoy their holiday, if they can do it legitimately; but I do object to the whole principle of compulsory closing of shops in order to give a very small section of the community a half-holiday. I do think that is a really cruel proposal; and the effect, as has been stated by more than one of the advocates of the measure, will be really to injure the smaller shopkeepers, and to benefit the larger ones—contrary to all the principles that are generally supposed to especially distinguish the Liberal party. Well, Sir, objecting as I do to the main principles of the Bill, I am yet quite prepared to admit that the country has given us a mandate in favour of it. I acknowledge that is the case, and therefore, following my honourable friend Mr. Oliver, I shall support the Bill and vote against the amendment. At the same time I agree with him that where a gross injustice is sought to be inflicted upon any particular class this Council ought as far as possible to protect that class, and to make such amendments in the Bill as will make it fairer than it is at present. I think that possibly some arrangement might be made which would carry out all the principal objects of the measure, and at the same time render it less oppressive than it is. There is a small class, and also a large class, which seem entirely neglected. I refer to the small class of shopkeepers who have no assistants, and to the large class of consumers. After all, it is in their interests we ought to legislate. We ought to legislate for the whole mass of the people. The consuming classes are the people, and we ought to provide proper accommodation for them—proper means of obtaining what they want in the shops—rather than to entirely ignore their interests for those of a small number—not more than 1 per cent. of the population—the shop-assistants. However, the interests of the consumers seem to be generally left out of sight. Any special interest that is active enough can make itself felt at elections; and of course a small class, by agitation and by pressing their claims, may become a very effective force on the occasion of an election, and I have no doubt they have made themselves such an effective force. One class that has been specially objected to as being able to make a comfortable living is the Chinamen. Well, how are they able to do that? It is because they are supplying a public want. If the Chinese shopkeepers are able to make a living it is quite clear they are able to do so only because a large number of the public require their services. There can be absolutely no other reason for it. Looking at it from this

point of view, which I think is a thoroughly sound, economic point of view,—the point of view of the consumer,—it seems to me that anything calculated to prevent that particular class from keeping shops would be a positive injury to the public generally. Well, Sir, I think, if the Bill is carried out nearly as it is at present, it will inflict very considerable annoyance and trouble and even loss upon the general public; but I think also that after a time the public will begin to find this out, and will be quite prepared to leave the thing alone, as the Hon. Mr. MacGregor said. I believe, really, that not only the general community, but the shop-assistants themselves, would ultimately be in a very much better position if all this kind of legislation were left alone. I believe, notwithstanding my honourable friend Mr. Bolt's objection to the *laissez faire* doctrine, that it is really and substantially a sound one that, in all cases in which some portion of the community are not directly injuring some other portion, the more they are left alone to carry on their occupations as they choose the better. I will only say this much further: I think it would be a great improvement on the Bill, if we were to have a compulsory measure at all, to see one day—Saturday for choice—made compulsory all over the country. I believe a great deal of inconvenience would be saved by it, and I think the Hon. Mr. Bolt gave excellent reasons why that day should be adopted. For my part, I should object to the delegation of this authority to the local bodies; we should have the day laid down by the Legislature once for all. If it is tyrannical, as I think it is, local option does not make it less so. The Turks object to the tyranny of the Pashas as much as to the tyranny of the Sultan, and this local tyranny is more likely to be injurious than the tyranny that proceeds from the central Legislature; and, of course, it is likely to have, indirectly, mischievous effects in the case of local bodies, for, instead of being elected for the purpose of looking after matters that immediately concern them—sanitation, and the proper ordering of the towns—members will be liable to be elected because they advocate some particular day on which to close the shops. That will be distinctly mischievous; and I regret that the Bill was not brought down making one day—whether Saturday or any other, but Saturday for choice—compulsory, instead of leaving it to the local bodies to fix the day. We could then do away with a great deal of the complicated machinery contained in this Bill, and I feel convinced that the interests of the general public, and really the comfort and convenience of the shop-assistants, would be better served by adopting this principle than by leaving the local bodies to fix the day.

The Hon. Mr. JENNINGS.—I am glad the Council has given more attention to the Bill this year than was shown last session. On that occasion it was thrown out with very little consideration; but this afternoon, I think, has proved that members have devoted a greater amount of attention to the Bill than they con-

sidered necessary on the last occasion. I could not help taking a note of one or two objections that were raised by several of the speakers who were opposed to the measure. I shall take my honourable friend Mr. Reynolds first. He spoke with regard to the people not being allowed to have a voice in the settlement of the day, so as to decide what would suit the majority of the people, and said he would oppose the Bill in consequence of that power being withheld; but following on a little later he pointed out clause 9, which gives the power in one of the subsections. Personally I am strongly in favour of the clause at present, because, as I believe, if local bodies and boroughs are not allowed to settle the day for themselves it will cause a great deal of difference of opinion, and will very probably bring about the downfall of the measure if not adopted. Saturday, I am convinced, will be the day decided on by-and-by. I believe it is the best day, and that ultimately it will come to that, and, if honourable members are willing to allow the Borough Councils and local bodies to settle the matter for themselves, I believe it is only a question of time when all will fall into line, and Saturday will be approved of. Take, for instance, the Jewish community, and that other body which has arisen in America—the Seventh Day Adventists. I think, if anybody notices how the Jewish people have succeeded in commerce, literature, *et cetera*, with only five days per week, and how the Seventh-Day Adventists also manage to thrive comfortably, it will prove that five days, or, at any rate, five and a half days, are quite sufficient for people to earn a living. The Jewish people have not lost in any way by it; they seem more fit for business, and to have clearer ideas of things in general. There was some reference made by various honourable gentlemen to Auckland. I had the honour to present a petition from a large majority of the Auckland shopkeepers in favour of the Saturday half-holiday. If honourable gentlemen have looked at that petition, and are acquainted with the circumstances and with the shopkeepers there, this fact will become clear to them: that the petition was extensively signed not only by the large shopkeepers, but by a large majority of the small shopkeepers about the boroughs, —not only in Auckland proper, but in the boroughs of Newton, Devonport, and Parnell; and I really think the same feeling exists all over the colony. I believe the majority of the shopkeepers themselves are in favour of having Saturday as a half-holiday. Some honourable members endeavour to make a point by saying the Bill will be unjust to small shops. While my sympathy is with the small trader, I do not see that we can support him to the detriment of the large trader. We should be just to one and all. That will be secured if we place them on the same footing, which is the object of the Bill before us. Moreover, I believe that both classes, the small trader and the large, realise the fact that it is not worth the candle, this continued irritation about closing, and would be glad for the Legislature to settle the matter.

Hon. Mr. Jennings

The present Act is unsatisfactory to both parties. The Hon. Mr. Shrimski made a remark about Liberalism, and stated that he was a Liberal at one time; but he would not claim to be one any longer, as he did not believe in legislation such as proposed by this Bill. Well, whether the associations of this Chamber have been too much for the principles he once held is a matter that perhaps I am not entitled to express an opinion upon, but I do not think the mere fact of an honourable member holding opinions against any measure that comes up here for discussion is sufficient to warrant him in considering that he alone holds Liberal principles. The whole effect of this Bill will, in my opinion, be advantageous in more respects than one. I believe it will have a good moral effect; I believe that it will tend to the physical well-being of shop-assistants, and that altogether, if adopted by the Council, it will prove the means of doing a great deal of good to employers, as well as to their assistants. It has been said it is a measure that has faults in it. I do not think we can claim that this Bill is an exception. There has not been a law yet made but some people have found fault with it, and it would indeed be a matter for rejoicing if this Bill, which is surrounded with many difficulties, were to go through without any objection. I trust the Council will pass its second reading, and that any amendments that are necessary to be made will be adopted in Committee. There are one or two clauses, perhaps, that need some explanation. I believe we shall be able to deal with these in the Labour Bills Committee, and to submit an amended measure which will be thoroughly workable, and that we shall be able to send forward a measure that will be as favourable to a majority of the shopkeepers as it is possible for us to make it.

The Hon. Mr. McLEAN.—One has only to listen to the arguments of those who are in favour of the Bill to feel satisfied that this is a Bill that should not go on the statute-book. As to its having been before the country, I am quite satisfied that if it went before the country by itself, and the opinion of the country were taken upon it, it never would go on the statute-book. We have heard some extraordinary arguments here in favour of Saturday in preference to other days. Sir, we have tried the Saturday half-holiday in Dunedin, and it has failed. They have gone back to opening their shops on Saturday afternoon. It has been tried in Christchurch, and there they have gone back to opening the shops again on Saturday afternoon: so that Saturday will not suit those two large towns in any way. Then, take the country towns—take, for instance, Oamaru and Timaru. Why, for years they have had their half-holiday in the middle of the week. How would it do if we prescribed Saturday as the half-holiday for them? The thing would never work at all. Then, it is said that Saturday is the natural day. Why, the proper argument is this: that people who are working hard all the week surely want to rest in the middle of the week, and then have

Sunday, the day of rest, in the beginning. If they get Saturday we have been told that it will make work for other people. Now, as to shutting the hotels, my honourable friend says that the licensees are under an agreement, and have paid for their licenses, and that therefore it would be wrong to ask them to shut on the half-holiday. The very same thing applies to everybody else that you are going to shut up. They all pay rent, and therefore it applies to them—I refer to those exempted in the Bill as well. But I hold that this Bill, no matter what you may do with it, will never work satisfactorily. If this half-holiday is to be given, why should not the poor railway men have their half-holiday as well? But you are going to make them work so that others may enjoy their holiday, and some people, no doubt, will be forced to work till twelve o'clock at night. It seems to me that those who are to be benefited by this measure are quite willing to shed every drop of their brothers' blood. Then, as to the Chinese traders. It is an extraordinary thing that the only town in which the Chinese shopkeepers can thrive in New Zealand is the Empire City of Wellington. Why are they supported here, and how? We do not find the Chinese shops in other towns, and how it is they so thrive here I cannot understand. The Bill is full of difficulties, and I say that, with all the Labour Bills Committee can do, it will be impossible to make it a satisfactory measure; it will give no satisfaction when they have done with it. For instance, take the process for deciding the half-holiday as it will apply in Dunedin and its suburbs. I think there are seven suburban boroughs round Dunedin; and, if they all meet to decide the date, what voice will Dunedin City have in saying on what day the half-holiday shall be? That part of the Bill certainly will not work. I do not wish to delay the Council in talking about a Bill that I believe is not satisfactory to any one concerned in it, and never will be satisfactory.

The Hon. Mr. ORMOND.—It appears to me that it is better to make any suggestion in regard to this Bill before it goes to the Committee, which will make any necessary alteration in it. It is understood all around that this Bill is going to pass—that the Council accepts the position that it is amongst the measures that have been before the country, and therefore it is to be passed by this House. The point I want to call attention to is that the Bill is legislating for only one class of people, and leaves out a class in the towns that is as much entitled to consideration as our shop-assistants. I ask the Labour Bills Committee when they are in Committee on this Bill to consider the case of the young men who are employed in the large institutions in the towns—in the banks, insurance offices, and so on. I consider that these young people are overworked ten times more than our shop-assistants—that they are suffering far more from a sweating system than our shop-assistants. If there is any honesty at all in the professions of Liberalism, let us, in dealing with a Bill like this, take into considera-

tion the claims of those people which I rise to bring before the attention of the Labour Bills Committee, and I do hope they will deal with that matter. If they do not, when the Bill comes back to the Council it will be the duty of some of us to make some proposal to add that class to this Bill. As to the Bill itself, I do not wish to take up time, as it has been fully threshed out, and it is of little use for a large number to express an opinion about the Saturday half-holiday. Of course, though accepting the Bill we reserve the right to make such alterations in its provisions as we may think necessary; and I hope we shall alter many of the provisions that have been sent down to us by the other House, and especially that provision most improperly put into the Bill relating to the licensed houses, which ought never to have appeared in a Bill like this. I have been rather amused with the opportunity that has been taken to deal with the Chinese, and I almost thought I was sitting again in a representative Chamber. But what occurred to me as more absurd was the fact that the Chinaman is really the person who comes in for nearly all the exemptions under this Bill. He occupies all the fruit-shops—at any rate, in this city—and the Bill appears to be framed specially to exempt him. Having no sympathy with the cry against him, I simply wish to call attention specially to this absurdity.

The Hon. Sir P. A. BUCKLEY.—Before the question is put, I should like to say one or two words only, because the Bill has been received somewhat with favour by the Council. The Council must have viewed with alarm the unholy alliance between my honourable friend Mr. Shrimski and my honourable friend Mr. Reynolds on this occasion; and I am afraid that something serious is likely to occur in consequence of this alliance. One of the first principles which the older members of this Council endeavour to inculcate upon young members of the Council is that there is no party here. I refer, Sir, to the language that has been given utterance to in this debate, about "Liberalism" or "Toryism," as made by an honourable gentleman, who endeavoured, in language I think unbecoming, to cast a reflection upon myself. The honourable gentleman was my friend, and I regret that he has deserted me and gone over to what he has been pleased to call the Tory side of this Chamber.

The Hon. Mr. SHRIMSKI.—Since the honourable gentleman has been in that position he has forgotten me.

The Hon. Sir P. A. BUCKLEY.—When the Hon. Mr. Reynolds was referring to this Bill I thought he was going to make some startling announcement. The Hon. Mr. Stewart, in speaking on this Bill, remarked that legislation of this kind should be gradual. I entirely agree with him, and it is because the Act at present upon the statute-book is unsatisfactory that we think it desirable to introduce this measure. It must be gradual and it must be the result of experience. I am quite sure

that when this Bill comes from the Labour Bills Committee it will be a little more satisfactory than it is at present. It is impossible to frame any perfect measure; and here I say at once that there is a portion of this Bill which was never introduced by the Government—that is, the portion relating to hotels. That was introduced in another place, and it is no part of the Bill as originally introduced by the Government, and therefore I think that the blame which has been thrown upon them is blame which they ought not to bear. I hope that the amendment of my honourable friend will not be carried. I think the Hon. Mr. Shrimski on a former occasion moved the rejection of this measure, and I trust that he will withdraw his objection to it now that he has nailed his colours to the mast: at any rate, I hope that there will be found in this Council sufficient honourable members to enable this measure to be sent to the Labour Bills Committee, and I have no doubt that it will there receive every consideration. I beg to move the second reading.

The Hon. Mr. REYNOLDS, with the leave of the Council, withdrew his amendment.

Bill read the second time.

The Council adjourned at ten minutes past five o'clock p.m.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.

Tuesday, 4th September, 1894.

First Readings—Second Reading—Government Advertisements—Rifle for Defence Forces—Wai-kouaiti-Merton Road—Amalgamation of Colonial and New Zealand Banks—Cook Islands—"Corners"—Loca Bodies—"Thirds" and "Fourth"—Ormondville Police Accommodation—Fruit-growing—Tenants' Right Bill—Elective Educational Bodies—Mangapai-Paroti Telephone—Gaming Bill—Rating on Unimproved Value Bill.

Mr. SPEAKER took the chair at half-past two o'clock.

PRAYERS.

FIRST READINGS.

Public Works Bill, Invercargill Racecourse Trustees Empowering Bill.

SECOND READING.

Fencing Bill.

GOVERNMENT ADVERTISEMENTS.

Sir R. STOUT asked the Premier, If it is true that the boycott applied by the Government to certain Opposition newspapers in regard to ordinary Government departmental advertisements has been also applied regarding bankruptcy advertisements paid for by the creditors of estates? He understood the Hon. the Minister of Justice objected to the use of the word "boycott" in this question, but he (Sir R. Stout) did not know any other word that would express the same meaning. It was a well-known word, and he did not use it in any offensive way. He simply wished to know

Hon. Sir P. A. Buckley

if it was true that the Government had refused to give to certain newspapers advertisements not paid for by the Government, but which would really be paid out of the estates concerned. They had seen the list of newspapers to which Government advertisements were given, and it was on this he had asked the question.

Mr. SEDDON said, as exception was taken to the use of the word "boycott," and very properly, he thought—it was not an English word—

Sir R. STOUT.—Oh, yes it is.

Mr. SEDDON said it was the name of a person. If the honourable gentleman simply asked if it were true that the refusal of the Government to give advertisements to certain newspapers extended to bankruptcy advertisements—

Sir R. STOUT had no objection to put it in that way.

Mr. SEDDON said the honourable gentleman had no doubt seen on the table of the House the list of newspapers in which Government advertisements were published. The object of the Government was to reduce the cost of advertisements. It did not apply in the case of bankruptcy advertisements.

Sir R. STOUT asked if the Premier was aware that instructions had been given to the Official Assignee.

Mr. SEDDON said the list was headed "Government advertisements." The honourable gentleman might ask the same question with regard to Insurance advertisements.

3.30. In this case the officers who had the responsibility would have to use their discretion. There was no wish whatever on the part of the Government to absolutely exclude any particular newspaper. The whole thing, as the honourable gentleman would see, resolved itself into a question of expense, and he would see presently the absolute necessity for something being done to keep the expense within bounds. The Government had not overdone the thing, however, so as to do any injustice to the Government business; but, if it could be shown that any loss was entailed by not more fully advertising, that was a phase of the question he would be quite prepared to consider and meet if necessary.

RIFLE FOR DEFENCE FORCES.

Mr. BUDDO asked the Minister of Defence, As the Martini-Henry rifle is now considered by experts to be an obsolete arm, will he take into consideration the question of procuring a composite rifle for our Defence Forces, consisting of a Martini breech and a Mitford barrel; thus providing a more effective weapon, with ammunition 50 per cent. lighter than the Martini, and uniform with that used in the Imperial army? He would like the Government to consider the advantages presented by the rifle mentioned in this question, as he was assured by experts that the expense of such a conversion would be very little indeed; while, as to the character of the weapon so converted, he might say that at the recent Bisley meeting

in July last, for the prize offered by the Secretary of State for War for military breech-loaders at a range of 900 yards, the winner used a rifle of this description, which he thought was sufficient to show that it was an efficient weapon.

Mr. SEDDON said that after mature consideration Colonel Fox had recommended the Martini-Henry rifle as the best adapted for the New Zealand Forces. The rifle referred to in the question was a more expensive weapon, whilst the cost of ammunition for it was almost prohibitive for Volunteers and rifle clubs; and again, the difficulty of providing a suitable range for such a weapon was almost insurmountable. This matter was referred to the Commandant, and he reported fully to the Government; and there was no doubt the cost was very high indeed. If they had a very long range for these rifles, as was required, serious accidents were bound to occur. As far as fighting in New Zealand was concerned, taking into consideration the configuration of the country, the Martini-Henry rifle was most suitable, and carried a sufficient distance.

WAIKOUAITI-MERTON ROAD.

Mr. PARATA asked the Minister of Lands, Whether he will place a sum of £100 on the supplementary estimates for the purpose of continuing the construction of the road leading from Waikouaiti Native reserve to Merton Railway-station—namely, from the spot about half a mile from Merton where the construction of the said road was left off last June?

Mr. J. MCKENZIE said the question referred to by the honourable gentleman would be fully considered when the public-works estimates were being prepared.

AMALGAMATION OF COLONIAL AND NEW ZEALAND BANKS.

Mr. G. W. RUSSELL asked the Colonial Treasurer, Are the Government aware whether negotiations are pending or contemplated for the amalgamation of the Colonial Bank with the Bank of New Zealand? If so, considering the fact that the colony has guaranteed the Bank of New Zealand up to £2,000,000, will they provide the House with an opportunity of expressing its opinion regarding the necessity or desirability of amalgamation, which may increase the contingent liability of the colony? He would like to point out that reports were circulated freely throughout the colony that such an amalgamation as was hinted at in this question was likely to come off. In the *Evening Post* of the 13th August it was stated, "The Colonial Bank recently renewed its application for a portion of the Government account, and it is understood that the reply from Ministers was advice to amalgamate with the Bank of New Zealand." In the *Dunedin Star* of the 31st August they found this statement: "The steps for the amalgamation of the Colonial and New Zealand Banks are understood to be progressing satisfactorily. Matters will probably be brought to a head within a fortnight." As these statements ap-

peared in usually well-informed journals, he hoped the Colonial Treasurer, if it was intended to bring about any such amalgamation, would give the House a full opportunity of discussing it.

Mr. WARD might say the Government were aware negotiations were proceeding, but those negotiations had not yet reached the Government. When they did reach the Government they would be fully considered, and the House would have the fullest opportunity of discussing the entire matter before any decision was arrived at.

COOK ISLANDS.

Mr. W. HUTCHISON asked the Premier, With reference to a despatch of His Excellency the Governor, of date 26th December last, and memoranda of the Premier thereon, will he inform the House of the position which New Zealand at present occupies towards the Cook Group of islands, and if the Government propose to seek any further or more permanent connection with the islands?

Mr. SEDDON said the position of New Zealand, so far as the Cook Group was concerned, was this: that Mr. Moss was sent there as Resident, and the Government of New Zealand paid him a salary of £500 a year. The appointment was recommended by the Government to the Imperial authorities. The communications from Mr. Moss passed through the hands of His Excellency the Governor, and through His Excellency to Ministers. The position was not at all a satisfactory one, for we had practically no control. He might say that the Government intended to ask that the position as between the colony and the Imperial authorities with reference to the Cook Group should be better defined.

"CORNERS."

Mr. W. HUTCHISON asked, Will the Government this session bring in a Bill to prevent the formation of what are known in commercial circles as "corners," by which the prices of the staple commodities of the colony are unduly enhanced and legitimate trade is seriously injured?

Mr. WARD said, if there was anything the honourable gentleman could suggest with the view of giving effect to what he desired, the Government would be very happy to consider it.

LOCAL BODIES' "THIRDS" AND "FOURTHS."

Mr. G. HUTCHISON asked the Minister of Lands, If provision will be made for the payment of the "thirds" and "fourths" on the amounts deposited by selectors of unsurveyed lands, and which amounts the Lands Department does not consider should be treated as part of "the price or value of the periodical payments and rental of land disposed of" under the various tenures mentioned in section 126 of "The Land Act, 1892"? He had asked a question to much the same effect some days ago, but the Minister by his answer did not seem to realise the position. He had no doubt it was a departmental answer; and

he would like the Minister himself to consider this question, inasmuch as it appeared that the provisions of the 126th section of the Land Act did not restrict "thirds" and "fourths" to being calculated only on money that happened to reach the Receiver of Land Revenue, but these allowances should be distributed from whatever source, on the fullest basis of "the price or value of the periodical payments and rental of all lands disposed of" in the various districts. He presumed that his honourable friend realised that the local bodies were subjected to very great inconvenience by reason of the money deposited for surveys not being made available to the local bodies in the making of roads to open up lands.

Mr. J. MCKENZIE said the Government were always very anxious to assist the local bodies as far as possible, and to such an extent as the law permitted. But in this case the law was against the honourable gentleman; and he thought that, being an eminent lawyer, the honourable gentleman ought to know the question he was putting could not possibly be given effect to without legislation being introduced on the subject. He thought that in this matter it only applied to cases where money was paid for unsurveyed land. The department could not possibly pay what it never got; consequently the Government could not give what was wished for by the honourable gentleman, and it was not his intention to introduce any legislation on this subject this year.

Mr. G. HUTCHISON asked if the honourable gentleman would take the opinion of the Law Officers of the Crown on this point, as it was of great importance to the local bodies.

Mr. J. MCKENZIE would have no objection to that. He felt confident that the honourable gentleman knew perfectly well what the answer would be.

ORMONDVILLE POLICE ACCOMMODATION.

Mr. HALL asked the Minister of Justice, if he will inquire into the nature of the police accommodation at Ormondville; and, if found inadequate, will he see that better accommodation is provided?

Mr. SEDDON said that inquiry had already been made, and it was found that certain alterations required to be carried out as soon as the estimates had passed the House.

FRUIT-GROWING.

Mr. T. MCKENZIE asked the Minister of Agriculture, Whether he will, with a view to assisting the fruit-growing industry, survey small sections of from five to ten acres of land suitable for fruit-raising; and whether he will also favourably consider the propriety of assisting settlers to stock their holdings with fruit-trees?

Mr. J. MCKENZIE was at a loss to know exactly what the honourable gentleman was wishing to arrive at in connection with this question. Whenever an application was made to the department for small areas for the fruit-growing industry they gave every encourage-

Mr. G. Hutchison

ment to such an industry, and if the honourable gentleman could indicate to him any places where this industry could be established he would have very great pleasure in providing an area of land, if there was an area available in the district, and in having it surveyed.

Mr. T. MCKENZIE asked for an answer to the second part of the question.

Mr. J. MCKENZIE said that, of course, as soon as these settlers were located on these sections to which the honourable gentleman referred it would be time enough to consider the question of providing them with fruit-trees. No doubt they could from the nurseries of the colony assist them to a certain extent, but to stock them entirely with fruit-trees was, he thought, out of the question altogether.

TENANTS' RIGHT BILL.

Mr. FLATMAN asked the Government, If they will bring in a Tenants' Right Bill during the present session of Parliament? Hearing from the Minister that there was some difficulty about bringing in a Fair Rent Bill, he thought that possibly a Tenants' Right Bill could be brought in with less trouble. He thought that after tenants had put certain improvements on their land they had a right before leaving it to have a valuation, so that they might get what was fair.

Mr. J. MCKENZIE said the Government intended to consider this question in connection with the Fair Rent Bill, so as to provide for the whole matter at the same time. He thought it was impossible to get the information they required so as to enable a matter of such importance to be dealt with this session. As he had stated in connection with the Fair Rent Bill, that would necessitate a large amount of information, and from that information he might be able to bring forward next session such legislation as might be satisfactory to the House.

ELECTIVE EDUCATION BODIES.

Mr. FLATMAN asked the Minister of Education, If it is the intention of the Government to introduce a Bill during this session of Parliament making it compulsory that all educational bodies having control of public funds shall be popularly elected? In explanation of this question, he might state that the Canterbury College was founded by "The Canterbury College Ordinance, 1873," by which twenty-three governors were appointed by name. This ordinance provided that "until there shall be thirty members of the college who are graduates of the University of New Zealand continuing upon the books of the college all vacancies shall be filled up as they occur by the remaining governors." There was no provision for the governors retiring; they were therefore appointed for life; but vacancies might arise from death, resignation, and certain disqualifications. Such vacancies were filled by the remaining governors until 1884, in which year the graduates first elected, as provided by the ordinance. He thought the time had now arrived when legislation should be introduced

to effect some change—say, that one-third of the governors should still be elected by the graduates, and that the other two-thirds should be elected, possibly, by the School Committees. If the Government would bring in a Bill to give effect to that, the tenants under these bodies, who had received very harsh treatment of late, would be placed in a better position.

Mr. REEVES said the honourable member would recognise that there were a number of these bodies which were not what might be termed popularly elected. To bring in a general measure dealing with them all would be a decidedly serious undertaking, and the House was not likely at this late period of the session to address itself to such an important question as that, when there were sixty-three orders of the day. He quite agreed with the honourable gentleman that in the case of the body he referred to the nature of the election was especially unsatisfactory, and he hoped next session to be able to move in the direction of putting the selection of its governors upon a much more satisfactory basis.

MANGAPAI-PAROTI TELEPHONE.

Mr. THOMPSON asked, Whether the Government will make provision for the extension of the telephone system from Mangapai to Maungakarama and thence to Paroti this session? He would like to point out that the first line referred to in this question would, he believed, pay on the outlay, as there was a large settled district there, and the cost would not be much. As to the second line, the parties concerned would be willing to subscribe liberally towards the cost.

Mr. WARD said he was now making inquiries to see how much the people interested would subscribe; but unless a subscription was given by them nothing could be done. This line would cost £950, and the estimated revenue was only £40 a year. As soon as he got the information regarding the amount likely to be subscribed he would inform the honourable gentleman what the Government proposed to do in the matter.

ADJOURNMENT.

Sir R. STOUT moved the adjournment of the House in order to discuss the question of Government advertisements in newspapers. He would first point out that if this list had been printed by the Printing Committee it would not have been necessary to move the adjournment of the House, but the Printing Committee had not printed it, and the people had no opportunity of knowing what had been done in reference to Government advertising in newspapers. He looked at the *Hansard* report of what took place in Committee of Supply, but the report was so condensed that it was impossible to ascertain what had been done in connection with these newspapers. He wished to bring the matter before the House and before the country, because he considered it a most important question. The order of the House was as follows:—

“That a return be laid before this House of (1) the names of the newspapers at present receiving Government advertisements; and (2) the names of those that formerly received them, but in which Government advertisements are not now inserted.”

The list of newspapers in which Government advertisements were inserted was as follows:—

Auckland Evening Star	.. Auckland.
Weekly Standard	.. ..
New Zealand Graphic	.. ..
Observer, Auckland	.. ..
New Zealand Herald	.. ..
Coromandel County News	.. Coromandel.
Northern Advertiser	.. Dargaville.
Waikato Times	.. Hamilton.
Northern Luminary	.. Kawakawa.
Manukau Gazette	.. Onehunga.
Hot Lakes Chronicle	.. Rotorua.
Northern Advocate	.. Whangarei.
Opotiki Herald	.. Opotiki.
Hauraki Tribune	.. Paeroa.
Bay of Plenty Times	.. Tauranga.
Thames Star	.. Thames.
Thames Advertiser	.. ..
Poverty Bay Herald	.. Gisborne.
Inglewood Record	.. Inglewood.
Budget	.. New Plymouth.
Taranaki Herald	.. ..
Egmont Settler	.. Stratford.
Evening News	.. Napier.
Hawke's Bay Herald	.. ..
Wairoa Guardian	.. Wairoa.
Bush Advocate	.. Danevirke.
Egmont Star	.. Havelra.
Paraekaretu Express	.. Hunterville.
Mercury	.. Marton.
Wanganui Herald	.. Wanganui.
Yeoman	.. ..
Wairapa Observer	.. Carterton.
Feilding Star	.. Feilding.
Manawatu Herald	.. Foxton.
Wairapa Standard	.. Greytown.
Eketahuna and Pahiatua Mail	.. Masterton.
Wairapa Star	.. ..
Weekly Star	.. ..
Pahiatua Herald	.. Pahiatua.
Manawatu Daily Standard	.. Palmerston N.
Manawatu Farmer	.. Shannon.
Evening Press	.. Wellington.
Fair Play	.. ..
New Zealand Mail	.. ..
New Zealand Times	.. ..
Weekly Herald	.. ..
Evening Star	.. Blenheim.
Marlborough Daily Times	.. ..
Express	.. ..
Pelorus Guardian	.. Havelock.
Kaikoura Star	.. Kaikoura.
Marlborough Press	.. Picton.
Golden Bay Argus	.. Collingwood.
Colonist	.. Nelson.
Takaka News	.. Takaka.
Charleston Herald	.. Charleston.
Lyell Times	.. Lyell.
Buller Miner	.. Westport.
Westport Times	.. ..
Brunner News	.. Brunerton.

Evening Star ..	..	Greymouth.
Grey River Argus ..	..	"
Reefton Guardian ..	..	Reefton.
Hokitika Guardian ..	..	Hokitika.
West Coast Times ..	..	"
Kumara Times ..	..	Kumara.
Ross and Okarito Advocate ..	..	Ross.
Akaroa Mail ..	..	Akaroa.
Ashburton Guardian ..	..	Ashburton.
Canterbury Times ..	..	Christchurch.
Lyttelton Times ..	..	"
Star ..	..	"
Press ..	..	"
Standard ..	..	Rangiora.
Ellesmere Guardian ..	..	Southbridge.
Temuka Leader ..	..	Temuka.
Timaru Herald ..	..	Timaru.
Waimate Times ..	..	Waimate.
Oamaru Mail ..	..	Oamaru.
Free Press ..	..	Balclutha.
Clutha County Gazette ..	..	Clinton.
Dunstan Times ..	..	Clyde.
Cromwell Argus ..	..	Cromwell.
Evening Star ..	..	Dunedin.
N. Z. Insurance, Finance, and Mining Journal ..	..	"
New Zealand Tablet ..	..	"
Otago Daily Times ..	..	"
Otago Workman ..	..	"
People's Journal ..	..	"
Bruce Herald ..	..	Milton.
Taieri Advocate ..	..	Mosgiel.
Mount Ida Chronicle ..	..	Naseby.
Palmerston and Waikouaiti Times ..	..	Palmerston.
Tapanui Courier ..	..	Tapanui.
Lake County Press ..	..	Arrow River.
Southern Standard ..	..	Gore.
Southland Daily News ..	..	Invercargill.
Southland Times ..	..	"
Southern Cross ..	..	"
Lake Wakatipu Mail ..	..	Queenstown.
Western Star ..	..	Riverton.

These were the whole of the papers in this list, and he understood the honourable gentleman to say, in answer to his question, that the bankruptcy advertisements were not confined to that list. But the fact was, a circular had been sent to the Deputy Official Assignees forwarding them this list as the list of newspapers in which advertisements were to be inserted.

Mr. SEDDON.—Government advertisements.

Sir R. STOUT said that list had been sent to the Deputy Official Assignees as the list of newspapers in which Government advertisements were to be inserted. They had no other but Government advertisements; and why was the list sent to them if it was not to be complied with? They had acted on it, and had assumed that bankruptcy advertisements were to be put in these papers, with regard to which the payment came out of the estates. When the Assignees were asked for advertisements they replied that they had to go by this list. In Auckland he found that the paper having the largest circulation was omitted—the *Weekly*

News; and two or three other small weekly papers got advertisements. Then, coming to Taranaki, he found that advertisements were inserted in two papers coming from the same office—namely, the *Budget* and the *Taranaki Herald*, one weekly and one daily. But the *Daily News* and the *Taranaki News* got no advertisements. Then, in Napier, he found the *Daily Telegraph* got no advertisements; the *Hawkes' Bay Herald* and the *News* got the advertisements. In Wanganui there were practically four papers—two daily and two weekly. The *Herald* and the *Yeoman* got the advertisements; the *Daily* and *Weekly Chronicle* got none. Then, coming to Nelson, the *Evening Mail* got no advertisements. In Wellington the *Evening Post* got no advertisements. In Dunedin the *Otago Witness*, which had the largest circulation of any paper in Otago, got no advertisements, its place being occupied apparently by a small paper called the *Workman*. Then, he thought that in Blenheim all the papers got advertisements. In Palmerston North one paper got the advertisements; the other got none. Then, in Balclutha, the oldest paper, the *Clutha Leader*, got no advertisements, and the newer paper got the advertisements. Several other papers in Otago got no advertisements, amongst them the *North Otago Times*, which was a morning paper, and the oldest there. Then, in Lawrence, the *Tuapeka Times* got no advertisements. The *Lake Wakatipu Mail* got advertisements, as well as the *Laketown Press*, at the Arrow. He could pick out others, but did not think it necessary to take up the time of the House. Then, on the West Coast, he found that almost all the papers got advertisements, except one—namely, the *Westport News*; he believed that was the only Opposition newspaper on the West Coast, and it got no advertisements. Now, he wished to point out, specially in regard to bankruptcy advertisements, that this was entirely unfair. He did not deny it was necessary the Government should not spend too much money on advertisements, but the fair thing to do was what he suggested many years ago—that the Government should have a rate proportioned to the circulation, and give advertisements to all papers at a rate according to the circulation. This rate should be a great deal below the rate of ordinary advertisements, and by this means the Government could get its advertising done much cheaper than now. What he protested against was this, which he considered entirely unfair: that the Government selected the papers on account of their political "colour." Wherever there were two papers in a town the Government had selected not the paper which had the largest circulation at all, but the paper which advocated their political opinions. That was done in Auckland, Dunedin, Nelson, Palmerston, and Marton in Rangitikei.

4.0. The *Rangitikei Advocate* did not get advertisements because it was an Opposition paper. That was entirely wrong. This was either an attempt to punish the Press or to buy it—he did not care which horn of the dilemma was chosen. He sub-

Sir R. Stout

mitted it was entirely unfair. He submitted, so far as the Government was concerned, it ought to look at this advertisement question from a purely business point of view—it ought to put the advertisements in those papers which had the largest circulation. They had no right to look at the political “colour” of the paper at all. It was no answer to him to say that other Governments had done so. If other Governments had done so they had done wrong, and he hoped they were duly criticized for that wrongdoing. He hoped the House would say that this practice of giving the spoils to the victors in the case of newspaper advertisements was entirely wrong. It was a short-sighted policy for any Government to adopt, or for any party to adopt; because, for example, if a Conservative Government came into office it might be said that they had a precedent for doing this, and they might act likewise, and so perhaps injure or destroy a Liberal paper.

An Hon. MEMBER.—They did so.

Sir R. STOUT said he did not know whether it was so or not. He believed the *Evening News* at Napier was denied advertisements. He believed he was still a small shareholder of that paper. But it must be remembered that in that case the paper was young in life. He believed the Government would be always open to attack in this respect unless they laid down some general principle such as he had pointed out; and that principle should be that the Government should fix a rate according to the circulation of the paper; and let that rate be low, and then if the paper would not take the advertisements let it leave them alone. He hoped he had not said anything which would provoke a lengthy discussion, but he trusted members of the House, whatever their political opinions were, would protest against the present system being allowed to continue.

Mr. SEDDON said the honourable member had read a list of the newspapers which were mentioned in the circular which the Government sent to the heads of the different departments; but the honourable gentleman had not read to the House the scores of newspapers which were in the same return—the names of the other papers in which Government advertisements had been previously authorised to appear.

Sir R. STOUT said that was because the second list was entirely incorrect. What had been done in respect to the second list was this: Instead of giving the papers which formerly received Government advertisements the return had been compiled and simply taken from the Post Office record of the newspapers registered. Some of the papers on the second list had never received a single advertisement—take, for example, the *War Cry*.

Mr. SEDDON said in the public interest on some Government matter of a social character there might be no objection to an advertisement appearing in the *War Cry*.

An Hon. MEMBER.—It never has appeared.

Mr. SEDDON said, of course, they knew the honourable gentleman's views, but he did not

see why the honourable member should sneer at that paper.

Sir R. STOUT said he had not done so, and the honourable member had no right to say so.

Mr. SEDDON understood the remark in that way, and he objected to the sneers and levity with which it was received. The return was this: “(1) That a return be laid before the House giving the names of newspapers which receive Government advertisements; and (2) the names of those which formerly received them, but in which Government advertisements are not now inserted.” He had stated that there was a rule previously—namely, that the whole of the newspapers at the sweet will of any of the officers might receive advertisements as often as those officers liked, and without any charge being fixed, or any arrangement being made. The officers had the sole control, and the result had been a tremendous expense to the country. Let them take the years 1891–92, 1892–93, and 1893–94, and what did they find? The *New Zealand Herald* and *Weekly News* received £427 6s. 9d. from the Lands and Survey Department alone, whilst the *Star*, the *Farmer*, and the *Graphic* only received £373 13s. 8d. It could not be said that there, at all events, it had been spoils to the victors. Take the two New Plymouth papers, as the honourable member had referred to them. They found that the *Herald* received £107 7s. 6d., and the *News* received £106 15s. 5d. The spoils in these cases had been evenly distributed. There was £213 in those two newspapers for land advertisements alone. He thought this amount excessive. Those newspapers circulated in the same place, and both probably had almost the same subscribers, and yet there was the double expense. No business-man would do that; or, if he did so, he would soon go into the Bankruptcy Court. Then, as to the Blenheim newspapers, the *Express* received £26 11s. 2d., whilst the other newspaper received £21 16s. 9d. It could not be said that the *Express* was favourable to the Government—quite the reverse. The *Otago Daily Times* and *Witness* received no less than £397 16s. 9d. from the Lands Department alone. There was a newspaper there called the *Globe*, and that received £110 3s. 6d. That was the only newspaper, he thought, there was in Dunedin that could be said to be at all favourable to the Government. If honourable members would look at the return laid on the table during last Parliament they would see where there had been extravagance. In three years over £11,000 had been paid by the Railway Commissioners for advertisements; and some papers alone in three years received £1,000. He thought the *Wellington Post* had received about £300, and the *Times* about the same. The two Christchurch papers, he thought, had received £900. Members would thus see where much money was going. No country could afford to pay the amount which New Zealand was paying to the different newspapers. The next question which arose was as to how due public notice should be given. Let them take

the case of the *Otago Witness*. There were a number of up-country papers: for instance, it could not be said that the *Bruce Herald* supported the Government.

Mr. ALLEN.—Yes, it does.

Mr. SEDDON said he had always looked upon it as being a very outspoken and independent paper. The Government came to this conclusion: that it was better to give the advertisements to each of the up-country papers than to one large paper in the centre which did not at all reach a number of the small settlers. The price of the large paper prevented its reaching many of the up-country settlers. The Government thought it was wiser to keep up the country journals and give them the Government advertisements, and at the same time give the advertisements to the *Otago Daily Times*. They had done so. There were two papers in Dunedin on the list—the *Star* and the *Otago Daily Times*. What used to go to the *Witness* would now go to the up-country newspapers.

Sir R. STOUT said half the up-country papers did not get advertisements.

Mr. SEDDON said the only one mentioned by the honourable member was the *Clutha Leader*.

Sir R. STOUT.—Not at all; the *Tuapeka Times*.

Mr. SEDDON said, according to the Lands Department the *Tuapeka Times* did get advertisements.

An Hon. MEMBER.—Not on the list.

Mr. SEDDON said he gave an explanation of that in Committee. There were other papers which got special advertisements, but which were not on the standard list. In Wellington there were the *Post*, the *Press*, the *New Zealand Times*, and the *Herald*. Three papers out of the four received the Government advertisements. Though there was a list for the guidance of the officers of the departments advertisements were given outside that list if the officers considered that extra advertising was necessary. For instance, as regarded bankruptcies, Assignees were not bound wholly to the list; and the same with regard to the Insurance and Post Office. The honourable gentleman was entirely under a misconception with regard to the list. The list of papers in which the officials could have advertised without any reference to Ministers was as follows:—

Auckland.—Aratapu: Wairoa Bell. Auckland: Auckland Evening Star, Auckland Weekly News and Town and Country Journal, Bible Standard, Church Gazette, Helping Hand, New Zealand A B C Guide, New Zealand Craftsman, New Zealand Farmer, Bee and Poultry Journal; New Zealand Graphic, Ladies' Journal, and Youths' Companion; New Zealand Herald, Observer, Produce Circular and Monthly Report, Sharland's Trade Journal, Sporting Review. Coromandel: Coromandel County News. Dargaville: Northern Advertiser. Hamilton: Waikato Times and Thames Valley Gazette. Kamo: Marsden Times.

Mr. Seddon

Kawakawa: Northern Luminary. Onehunga: Manukau Gazette and Onehunga District Weekly Courier. Rotorua: Hot Lakes Chronicle. Whangarei: Gumdiggers' Weekly, Northern Advocate.

Thames.—Opotiki: Korimako Hou, Opotiki Herald, Whakatane County and East Coast Gazette. Paeroa: Hauraki Tribune and Thames Valley Advertiser, Ohinemuri Gazette. Tauranga: Bay of Plenty Times and Thames Valley Warden. Te Aroha: Te Aroha and Ohinemuri News and Upper Thames Advocate. Thames: Thames Star, Thames Advertiser and Miners' News.

Gisborne.—Gisborne: Poverty Bay Herald.

New Plymouth.—Inglewood: Inglewood Record and Waitara News. New Plymouth: Budget and Taranaki Weekly Herald, Daily News, Taranaki Herald, Taranaki News. Stratford: Egmont Settler.

Napier.—Danevirke: Bush Advocate. Napier: Daily Telegraph, Evening News and Hawke's Bay Advertiser, Hawke's Bay Herald, Hawke's Bay Weekly Courier, New Zealand Fire and Ambulance Record. Waipawa: Waipawa Mail. Wairoa: Wairoa Guardian and County Advocate.

Wanganui.—Hawera: Egmont Star; Hawera and Normanby Star, Patea County Chronicle, and Waimate Plains Gazette. Hunterville: Paraekaretu Express, Hunterville, Ohingaiti, Moawhango, and Rata Advertiser. Mania: Waimate Witness. Marton: Mercury, Rangitikei Advocate and Manawatu Argus. Patea: Patea County Press. Wanganui: Wanganui Chronicle and Patea-Rangitikei Advertiser, Wanganui Herald, Weekly Chronicle and Patea-Rangitikei Record, Yeoman.

Wellington.—Carterton: Wairarapa Observer, Featherston Chronicle, East Coast Advertiser, and South County Gazette. Feilding: Feilding Star. Foxton: Manawatu Herald. Greytown: Wairarapa Standard. Masterton: Eketahuna and Pahiatua Mail, Wairarapa Daily Times, Wairarapa Star, Wairarapa Weekly Times, Weekly Star and Wellington District Advertiser. Otaki: West Coast Mail and Horowhenua County Advertiser. Pahiatua: Pahiatua Herald. Palmerston North: Manawatu Daily Standard, Rangitikei Advertiser, and West Coast Gazette; Manawatu Daily Times. Pitone: Hutt and Petone Chronicle. Shannon: Manawatu Farmer and Horowhenua County Chronicle. Wellington: Catholic Times, Church Chronicle, Evening Post, Evening Press, Fair Play, New Zealand Central Trade Report; New Zealand Mail, Town and Country Advertiser; New Zealand Times, Register and Property Investors' Guide, Southern Sunbeam, Typo, Weekly Herald, Wellington Prices Current and New Zealand Trade Review. Woodville: Examiner.

Blenheim.—Blenheim: Evening Star, Marlborough Daily Times and Town and Country Advertiser, Marlborough Express, Marlborough Weekly News. Havelock: Pelorus Guardian and Miners' Advocate. Kaikoura:

Kaikoura Star and North Canterbury and South Marlborough News. Picton: Marlborough Press, County of Sounds Gazette.

Nelson.—Collingwood: Golden Bay Argus. Nelson: Colonist, Nelson Evening Mail. Takaka: Takaka News and Collingwood Advertiser.

Westport.—Charleston: Charleston Herald, Brighton Times, and Croninville Reporter. Lyell: Lyell Times and Central Buller Gazette. Westport: Buller Miner, Westport News, Westport Times and Evening Star.

Greymouth.—Brunnerton: Brunner News, Blackball Courier, and Grey Valley Advertiser. Greymouth: Evening Star and Brunnerton Advocate, Grey River Argus, Weekly Argus. Reefton: Inangahua Herald and New Zealand Miner, Inangahua Times, Reefton Guardian.

Hokitika.—Hokitika: Hokitika Guardian and Evening Star, Leader, West Coast Times. Kumara: Kumara Times and Dillman's and Goldsborough Advertiser. Ross: Ross and Okarito Advocate and Westland Advertiser.

Christchurch.—Akaroa: Akaroa Mail and Banks Peninsula Advertiser. Ashburton: Ashburton Guardian; Ashburton Mail, Rakaia, Mount Somers, and Alford Forest Advertiser. Christchurch: Canterbury Times, Lyttelton Times, Mercantile and Bankruptcy Gazette of New Zealand, New Zealand Baptist, New Zealand Church News, New Zealand Methodist, New Zealand Railway Review, New Zealand Schoolmaster, New Zealand Volunteer and Civil Service Gazette and Naval and Military Chronicle, New Zealand War Cry and Official Gazette of the Salvation Army, Press, Prohibitionist, Star, Truth, Weekly Press, Young Soldier. Oxford (East): Oxford and Cust Observer. Rangiora: Standard and North Canterbury Guardian. Southbridge: Ellesmere Guardian.

Timaru.—Temuka: Geraldine Guardian, Temuka Leader. Timaru: South Canterbury Times, Timaru Herald. Waimate: Waimate Times.

Oamaru.—Oamaru: North Otago Times, Oamaru Mail.

Dunedin.—Balclutha: Clutha Leader, Free Press. Clinton: Clutha County Gazette and Potopoto Chronicle and Clinton Advertiser. Clyde: Dunstan Times, Vincent County Gazette, and General Goldfields Advertiser. Cromwell: Cromwell Argus and Northern Goldfields Gazette. Dunedin: Evening Star, Farmers' Circular, Katipo, Licensed Victuallers' Gazette and Hotel Guide; New Zealand Insurance, Finance, and Mining Journal; New Zealand Presbyterian, New Zealand Tablet, Otago Daily Times, Otago Witness, Otago Workman, Dunedin and Suburban Advertiser, People's Journal, Phonographic Magazine and Typewriting News, Temperance Standard. Lawrence: Tuapeka Times. Milton: Bruce Herald. Mosgiel: Taieri Advocate. Naseby: Mount Ida Chronicle. Palmerston: Palmerston and Waikouaiti Times. Roxburgh: Mount Ben-

ger Mail. Tapanui: Tapanui Courier and Central Districts Gazette.

Invercargill.—Arrow River: Lake County Press. Gore: Mataura Ensign, Southern Standard. Invercargill: Southern Cross, Southlander, Southland Daily News, Southland Times, Weekly Times. Queenstown: Lake Wakatipu Mail. Riversdale; Waimea Plains Review and Market Report. Riverton: Western Star and Wallace County Gazette.

From this honourable members would see how necessary it was that the Government should do something to stop the wholesale waste of the people's money. If they had gone too far the question might be reconsidered; but what they had done had been in the interests of economy, and not with a view to punish or to purchase any of the newspapers.

Mr. G. HUTCHISON would point out that the Premier was, as usual, endeavouring to burke the question. The question was as to the mode of distributing the Government patronage with regard to advertising at the present time. The Premier had referred to a long printed list of papers—which really, as the honourable member for Wellington City had indicated, might have been extracted from a directory—in some of which Government advertisements had been occasionally inserted. But that was not the present question; it was not the question whether large sums of money had been spent in advertising by various departments of the Government. That might have been very wrong; but the question was, how the Government patronage was now being dispensed; and it must be clear to any one who looked at the list recently drawn up by Ministers that the Government advertising was being dispensed in the most partial, and he should say shameful, manner. It was unnecessary to go any further than Wellington. They found that the paper which had undoubtedly the largest circulation, and which commanded the largest range of readers, had been boycotted by the Government for no other reason than the public could see than that it had exposed some curious dealings of the Premier and his colleagues during the recess. The Government would do well to say they would revise that list, and inform the House that they would proceed on business lines in advertising so as to bring Government announcements to the attention of the public. If they did that the House would be satisfied, but if they persisted in the present line of conduct they would certainly deserve every censure that could be directed against them. He had referred in Committee of Supply to another place where he was somewhat acquainted with the circumstances of the papers—Wanganui. There a daily and a weekly which were fulsome in their support of the Premier individually got all the advertisements, while another daily and weekly which had an equal if not larger circulation got nothing at all. He had suggested to the Premier that the least he could do would be to alternate the advertisements, which would give as full publicity as the present system, and would take away the

present reproach. All he urged was: Let the patronage of the Government be impartial, and proceed consistently with business principles, so as to get Government announcements into the hands of those who were concerned in seeing them.

Mr. SEDDON asked if the honourable gentleman knew that there were three new papers on the coast.

Mr. G. HUTCHISON said he was quite aware of it.

Mr. SEDDON asked, should the Government give advertisements to those new papers?

Mr. G. HUTCHISON did not say so; he said they should proceed on business lines.

Mr. ALLEN understood the Premier to say the object of the Government was to reduce the cost of advertising. He did not know whether the Premier intended that to refer to the Crown Lands Department, or to make an exception in regard to that department. But if he did not intend to make an exception he did not know of what value the Premier's remarks were, because the advertising in the Crown Lands and Survey Departments had increased since 1891-92 from £1,121 in one year to £1,609 in 1893-94.

Mr. J. MCKENZIE.—Before the list went out.

Mr. ALLEN did not know anything about that. He had the return of advertising year by year, and it was curious that the advertising, instead of being decreased, had increased by £500 in two years; therefore, if the alteration had been made, as regarded the list of papers, with the view of decreasing the cost of advertising, it had failed, because the cost had increased. And the year 1892-93 was worse, for in that year £1,907 was spent in advertising by the Crown Lands and Survey Department. The Premier had referred to the fact that the *Star*, and *Farmer*, and *Graphic*, in Auckland, had received a large sum in three years, while the *New Zealand Herald* and *Weekly News* received the still larger sum of £427; but he forgot to point out that, while in 1891-92 the *Star*, *Farmer*, and *Graphic* received £106, the *Star*, *Farmer*, and *Graphic* now received, in 1893-94, £141. Now, what had happened to the other newspaper, which was not a Government paper, but which had a larger circulation? In 1891-92 it received £120, but that amount, instead of increasing, had decreased to £112 in 1893-94. The *New Zealand Herald* was now, apparently, getting nothing, as it was not on the list. Now coming to Wellington, he supposed it would be generally admitted that the paper which had the largest circulation was the *Post*. How much did honourable gentlemen think the *Post* received in three years from the Crown Lands Department? £67 3s. For the three years ending with 1893-94 the *Press* received £32 14s. 6d. But what was the case with regard to the morning paper, which he did not say was a Government paper, but would leave honourable members to judge from the amount it was receiving by way of money for advertising by the Crown Lands Department?—£332 12s. 3d.—three times as

Mr. G. Hutchison

much as the other two put together. Was that spoils to the victors, or what was it?

Mr. J. MCKENZIE.—That includes the *Mail*.

Mr. ALLEN.—Yes; the *Times* and *Mail* received three times as much as the other two papers put together. Did honourable members think that was a fair proportion of the advertisements? Did they not know in their own minds quite plainly and distinctly that it was a reward, and nothing else?

Mr. REEVES.—They are not getting anything now.

Mr. ALLEN said, then he was afraid the *Times* had given up its allegiance to those sitting on the Government benches, or, at any rate, to the Minister of Education, or that honourable gentleman had given up his allegiance to it. Then, going on to the Dunedin papers; it must be admitted that the *Otago Daily Times* did receive a fair share of advertisements; but looking at the evening papers, which were in existence there till a year ago, there was a very curious state of things. The *Globe*, which existed only to die about twelve months ago, in 1891-92 received £34 1s. 6d. for advertising from the Crown Lands Department.

An Hon. MEMBER.—A bribe.

Mr. ALLEN.—Well, here was the bribe offered to the *Evening Star* in the same year—a paper which circulated throughout the whole of Dunedin, and had he did not know how much larger circulation than the *Globe*: it received £28. The next year the *Globe* received £74, while the *Star* only received £22. Was that not a bribe?

Mr. SEDDON said the *Star* did not circulate largely in the country districts.

Mr. ALLEN said it circulated throughout the whole of his district, through the Taieri, and very largely in the Minister of Lands' own district, and in Waikouaiti. Did the *Globe* circulate largely in those districts? Certainly not. It had only a very small circulation. So, as a matter of fact, the *Globe* received in two years £108, while the *Star* in three years received £71. Every one from that part of the world knew the relative values of the two papers as channels for advertising; and, if the thing were considered apart from party, honourable members could come to no other conclusion than that it was a bribe for support. It was not necessary to refer to all the other small papers; but there was no doubt this was one of the means used to purchase support.

Mr. J. MCKENZIE supposed this was part of the programme to give a certain amount of food to the Conservative papers in the colony in order to enable them to bait the Government a little more than they had done in the past. The honourable gentleman

4.30. who had just sat down passed a remark which he thought should not have been made—namely, that there was an attempt to purchase support by the Government. That honourable gentleman acted very unfairly, he thought, in referring to the statement he held in his hands showing the cost of adver-

tisements in the Lands Department during the last year, and showing that it had increased. He also said the circulation of the list was because of the high prices charged for advertising throughout the colony. This list referred to the year ending on the 31st March last, and the new circular was only sent out in April, showing that the fruits of that list could not be seen until next year, when it would be discovered whether or not the Government would be able to curtail the expenditure on advertising. He would tell the House that he could not say at the present moment what was the "colour" of a large number of the papers referred to. He knew a few of them, of course; and one of the greatest difficulties while he was Minister of Lands was to decide in what papers advertisements should be published. He got numbers of applications from country papers stating that the settlers in certain districts wanted to see the lands advertisements, and he came to the conclusion that if it went on at this rate the increased cost would be enormous. The list sent out to the officers of the department did not at all bind them to the newspapers in that list necessarily. They could still advertise in any other paper if they came to the conclusion it was necessary; but they must draw the line somewhere. What was all this noise about? If they had given all the Government advertisements to the Opposition papers those honourable gentlemen who had brought the question up would not have said one word about it.

Sir R. STOUT.—I should.

Mr. J. McKENZIE said, Oh, no; spoils to the victors would be quite fair then. When the present Government came into office they found that a large number of newspapers were treated in the same way—and far worse. They never saw one shilling of Government money for advertising. And now the Government endeavoured to give fair-play by circulating Government advertisements in all the papers. The honourable member for Wellington City referred to three or four papers in Otago which were not on the list; but he saw that those papers were down as having received sums of money from the Government.

An Hon. MEMBER.—That was before the list was issued.

Mr. J. McKENZIE said, Yes; it was before the list was issued; but if it was found necessary by the officers of the Lands Department to advertise in any newspaper not on the list the lands open in their district they could do so. But the Government, however, were not going to confine their advertising to the big newspapers of Dunedin. Honourable members must know that in the country districts the people took in the local newspapers, and knew where to look for the local news, and when an advertisement appeared in their local newspaper they knew where to look for it.

An. Hon. MEMBER.—What about the Dunedin *Evening Star*?

Mr. J. McKENZIE.—Well, the honourable gentleman had stated the Dunedin *Evening Star* had a large circulation. It had, he admitted, a large circulation in Dunedin, but

that did not extend to the country. Very few copies of the paper reached Palmerston; and that was one of the reasons why he did not care what that newspaper often said about him. His people never saw it. The case of the *Otago Daily Times* was different. It circulated throughout the country districts, and the people saw it. The Government worked entirely on business lines, and entirely irrespective of any "colour"; so that honourable members had been barking up the wrong tree, he could assure them. The Government had no intention of giving their advertising to newspapers which blindly supported them. He had no doubt if they wanted to put a newspaper right they could find the ways and means of doing so if necessary. The fact of the matter was that the Conservative papers did the Government a great deal of good in running them down. If they did not make reflections, the people might say the Government were getting too popular altogether. He thought it was time they put an end to this discussion on newspapers. They had had enough of it this session. It would be much better to wait until next session and see how much the Government had saved in advertising.

Mr. BUCHANAN was more than surprised at the statement of the Minister of Lands that the distribution of advertisements had been conducted on business lines. Take the case of the *Evening Post*, for instance. Look at its columns. He did not think it was necessary to describe the newspaper. It would speak for itself. He had no connection whatever with that newspaper, but the fact must be plain to everybody who chose to look for himself that from a business point of view the *Post* should receive all Government advertisements; yet it was boycotted altogether. The real fact was that the *Post* had been fearless in its exposition of innumerable Government abuses, and this was the penalty meted out to it.

Mr. REEVES.—Is not the *Evening Press* against the Government?

Mr. BUCHANAN hoped the honourable gentleman would not interrupt him. Then, in the case of the *Evening Star*, in Dunedin, the Minister of Lands had stated that it circulated only in the town, and that the Government therefore gave its advertisements to the morning paper, the *Otago Daily Times*, which circulated largely in the country districts. How did this rule, laid down in connection with the Dunedin papers, apply in the case of the Wellington papers? Which of the Wellington papers had the largest circulation in the country?

An Hon. MEMBER.—The *Times*.

Mr. BUCHANAN said the honourable member would have to reside a little longer in Wellington before he knew much about the Wellington newspapers. Everybody knew that the *Evening Post* circulated very largely in the country districts. All along the railway-lines the people very largely depended on the *Post* for their news.

Mr. J. McKENZIE.—You advertised in the *Post* at election-time.

Mr. BUCHANAN said that that was not true; that the *Post* had very seldom said a word in his favour, and it had frequently opposed him. Then, the Premier told them that the amount expended on railway advertisements was such that the colony could not afford to continue that expenditure. He would not debate that question with the honourable gentleman, because he had not the necessary information, but, taking the advertisements of excursions, holiday-trips, shows, and what not, when the Railway Department ran special trains, it might very well be that the amount spent in advertising might pay for itself over and over again on such occasions. It was a business question which the Commissioners alone could decide, and they should be left untrammelled to do so. There could be no question that the Government had in the matter of advertisements, as in other matters of policy, followed the line of "the spoils to the victors." The remarks which had fallen from the Premier indicated, however, that they might, perhaps, expect better things in the future. He therefore hoped that newspapers would be treated a little more fairly in the future than in the past, and that the public would be able to get their information from the channels where they had a right to look for it—namely, from the newspapers having the largest circulation.

Mr. BELL was not going to refer to the newspapers. He wished to refer to the answer the Colonial Treasurer had given to the honourable member for Riccarton, when he understood the Colonial Treasurer to say that there had been negotiation between the Colonial Bank and the Bank of New Zealand before the directorate had been appointed, before the colony was represented by a President, before an Auditor had been appointed, and before the House had any opportunity, through its Government, of securing the interests of the colony. Were they to be told that these negotiations were to be brought down and laid before the House without the colony having the slightest opportunity of being protected? What did the Colonial Treasurer tell them when the Bill was introduced? He told them that the colony would be protected by its President. It would be further protected by its Auditors. He said there would be a President and an Auditor appointed by the Government, and that no dangerous business would be taken, because the President had the power of veto, and the Auditor would have to report on the new business to be taken. What right had anybody to negotiate under these circumstances while the Board had not been elected? Had the old Board power to negotiate?

Mr. J. McKENZIE.—You had better ask the Board.

Mr. BELL was asking the Colonial Treasurer. The members who accepted the assurance of the Government had been betrayed and misled if these things were to take place. Why did not the Colonial Treasurer

permit the colony to know that the Bank of New Zealand had the power to coalesce with another institution in the interval without the consent of the House? If they had this power it showed a want of caution on the part of the Government that this power should be given to the old directorate to play ducks and drakes in this way. This might or might not be a good piece of business—he was not going to express an opinion about it, but he knew that it might be a very bad business; and if negotiations took place without the colony having the protection of the officers who the Colonial Treasurer assured the House would be appointed, then a very great wrong was being done. It was all very well to be told that these negotiations could only be brought to a head, and that then the President would be appointed. They were given to understand that the bank would not negotiate for or undertake any new business of any kind until they were in the position of having first of all a new Board of Directors, and then the supervision of the President and Auditor. And now they were told that powerful politicians could combine and negotiate arrangements to engineer business of this kind through the House before the appointment of a President or an Auditor. Would the honourable gentleman tell the House whether an Act of Parliament was necessary, and whether he intended to bring an Act down? Was it not a fact that the Government had come to the conclusion that an Act was not necessary, and that the whole thing could be arranged now, and that then there was to be a mere affirmance by the new Board of the previous arrangement? If the Treasurer would assure the House that nothing would be done without the passing of an Act, then the House was to be fairly dealt with; but, if these negotiations were to go on behind the backs of those who had guaranteed the two millions of money to this institution, without any single person who was concerned for the colony being consulted—for the Colonial Treasurer had no authority until the President was appointed; he had no veto, no right to take any action—if these negotiations were to go on, and consent of Parliament was not required, and the two institutions were to be combined in this way, under cover of the two millions guaranteed by the colony, then he repeated that the House had been betrayed and misled.

Mr. WARD was exceedingly surprised at such remarks falling from an honourable gentleman who occupied so high a legal position. The honourable gentleman knew the Government were going to appoint a President. Was not the honourable gentleman aware that there was a Board of Directors in London, and that until the Directors were appointed in the colony the change of management could not take place in the colony? Why should the honourable gentleman impute that the Government were neglecting their duty in this matter by delaying the appointment of a President? The Government were not delaying the appointment of a President. The Government intended, when the President was appointed,

under the new conditions of the Bank of New Zealand, to take up their true position towards that institution. Now, what was the fact? There was to be a meeting of the shareholders of the bank on the 26th of this month to elect Directors, and the Government had not interfered, either directly or indirectly, with the selection of Directors, who had to be appointed by the shareholders of the Bank of New Zealand. Why had they not interfered in the selection of Directors? Because the Government did not intend to interfere with the carrying-on of the work of the institution except in so far as it affected the interests of the colony, and those interests would be conserved by the appointment of a President and an Auditor. The honourable gentleman had imputed delay in the matter to the Government. Now, there had been no delay on the part of the Government.

Mr. BELL had not imputed delay. He had merely said that the honourable gentleman had not provided those precautions in his Bill which would prevent such negotiations as were now taking place from taking place before he could appoint a President.

Mr. WARD said the honourable gentleman had shared the responsibility of the Government in this matter. If it were necessary to have an alteration made such as the honourable gentleman suggested, then he thought it was the honourable gentleman's duty to have pointed that out to the House when the Bill was before the House. It was all very well to say now the Government had neglected their duty in the matter. What was the argument of the honourable member? It was this: that certain negotiations were now proceeding, and that the Government was not doing its duty in not having appointed a President to say whether such negotiations should take place or whether they should be confirmed.

Mr. BELL said they had done without it.

Mr. WARD said the Government had no responsibility yet in this matter. Now, the honourable gentleman professed to be anxious for the interests of the colony. The whole of the two millions which was guaranteed under the Share Guarantee Act had not yet been raised. The greater proportion of that money was to come in in October, and therefore this money had not yet been paid to the bank. The Government knew as well as the honourable member knew how important it was that good and independent men should be appointed to the positions of President and Auditor of the bank. The Government were very anxious to make a thoroughly good selection, and one which would commend itself to the House and to the country. The negotiations which were proceeding now were a matter entirely between the two institutions concerned.

An Hon. MEMBER.—No.

Mr. WARD said that in the meantime it was so. If after the negotiations had been proceeding some time they came to a point when they could be submitted to the Government, the responsibility of the Government then commenced, and it would be for them to see then

whether they were of a nature that would be in the interests of the country; and, in the event of any action being necessary, no decision would be arrived at in an important matter of this sort unless the House approved of it, and therefore the House would be taken into the confidence of the Government before anything was done.

Mr. BELL.—Supposing they do it without coming to you?

Mr. WARD would venture to say it was very unlikely they would do anything of the sort.

An Hon. MEMBER.—What is to prevent them?

Mr. WARD said that if honourable members raised all sorts of questions in this way he could not be expected to answer them. The honourable gentleman had put a plain and straightforward question, and he (Mr. Ward) had given a plain and straightforward answer. Considering the responsibility to the colony of the gentlemen connected with the Bank of New Zealand, if they affirmed or agreed to anything without the concurrence of the Government and the House they would do a very improper thing, and he did not think, himself, it was at all likely anything of the sort would be done. He regretted that his honourable friend had thought it necessary to make the criticism he had made, although it was within his rights to do so, because this was a matter in which the whole colony was interested, but it should not be approached in a party spirit at all. He did not think that, so far as the Government were concerned, anything wrong had been done, and it was therefore wrong that the charge should be levelled against them that they were not doing their duty in this matter. They were anxious to do their duty to the best of their ability, and they could not stop negotiations from proceeding. He thought it would be a great mistake on the part of the Government to step in and interfere in negotiations which might be material to the interests of the institution which they had guaranteed. But when they received any proposals, he had given the House the assurance that day—and he repeated it now—that at the very earliest moment they would take an opportunity of submitting these proposals to the House, and that the House would be taken into the confidence of the Government.

Mr. BELL.—Before they are to be carried out?

Mr. WARD.—Most certainly. He did not think any more need be said on the matter. Adverting now to the question of advertising, he would like to say one word. It was a mistake to suppose that the list referred to was a list which was adhered to in its entirety by the Government.

Sir R. STOUT.—Why put it on the table, then?

Mr. WARD said circumstances did arise when it became necessary, in the interests of the people, who read various papers, to have advertisements published in papers which were not on this list at all. The honourable member for Wairarapa had mentioned the *Evening Post* as

an instance. There were now three departmental advertisements in that paper, one of them a very important advertisement. He referred to one calling for tenders for mail-services. The honourable gentleman mentioned this paper as one which was excluded from receiving the advertisements which were given to some other papers.

Mr. BUCHANAN.—No.

Mr. WARD.—Then, he must have misunderstood the honourable gentleman. At any rate, it was not the case. For instance, some of their advertisements were published in the *Weekly News*, which was another paper referred to as not being recognised by the Government. The Government advertising was being regulated in this way to a very great extent for the purpose of saving money, and he thought that must be admitted to be right. It was impossible for the Government to give the Government advertisements to all the newspapers in this colony. A selection of some sort had to be made, and the responsibility for making that selection, of course, rested with the Government.

Mr. G. W. RUSSELL wished to say one or two words with regard to the statement of the Colonial Treasurer as to enabling the House to express an opinion, when they were in a position to do so, on this banking question. He was very glad to have an assurance so clear and distinct from the Treasurer that the Government would come down to the House with any proposal that might be made, so that the House might express its opinion regarding that matter. Of course, considering the relation in which the colony stood to the Bank of New Zealand in having given assistance to the bank, they could not be blind to the fact that the Government must be aware, and had a right to be aware, of any negotiations that might be in progress, and he sincerely hoped the Government, at the earliest possible moment, would give the House an opportunity of going fully into the matter. He had no wish to say one word as to the liability in which either institution was involved. He thought they had a statement as to what was the position of the Bank of New Zealand at the time the Bank Share Guarantee Act was passed. With regard to the other institution, there must of course be an object in the managers seeking to coalesce with a bank which had a guarantee of two millions provided by the State. That being the case, it was of the utmost importance that the House should have the fullest information before anything was done in that matter.

Mr. PIRANI wished to say a few words in regard to the answer given to the honourable member for Patea with reference to Question No. 10. He would like to point out to the Minister of Lands the great unfairness of giving "thirds" to local bodies on money paid on account of surveyed lands and not giving them to local bodies when it was a question of money paid on account of unsurveyed lands. As a rule, they would find that in the case of surveyed lands roads were either made or in

course of construction; but that was not at all the case in regard to unsurveyed land. Besides that, the Government happened to be out of pocket in surveying surveyed land, whereas in regard to unsurveyed land the Government had got the money in advance, and very probably the surveys would not be completed for another two or three years. Therefore they had the advantage of that money, although it had to be repaid to the selector in the shape of rent. Under these circumstances, he thought it was only fair, if the present law did not allow it, that some provision should be made in an amending Act by which the local bodies would get their fair share of the amount paid for unsurveyed land in the same way as they did for surveyed land.

Sir R. STOUT would not take up more than two or three minutes. First of all, he had to say it was perfectly plain, even from this list of newspapers receiving Government advertisements, that there must be political "colour" imported by somebody into the giving of these advertisements. He would take the Napier papers by way of illustration. Everybody knew that the *Herald* had the largest circulation there, and its "colour" the honourable member knew. Its share of land advertisements for three years had amounted to £16 7s. 9d.; whilst the *Evening News* of Napier had got for those three years, in land advertisements, more than double that sum—namely, £38 1s. 9d. That was an illustration sufficient to enable them to test this matter. Could the Government give him one instance of an Opposition newspaper being preferred to one that was supporting the Government?

An Hon. MEMBER.—The *Otago Daily Times*.

Sir R. STOUT said the *Otago Daily Times* was not an instance. It was the only morning newspaper in Dunedin, and that was the reason why it got the advertisements. But if the honourable member wished to go to Dunedin for an instance, let them see what had happened in the case of the *Otago Witness*. It had the largest circulation of any weekly in the Middle Island, or, at any rate, of any weekly in Otago. Its circulation was exceedingly large. Yet it had actually been denied Government advertisements; whilst the *Otago Workman*, with only about one-tenth the circulation, if it even had that, had got the advertisements which formerly the *Witness* got. Why? This was the test. If the Government could name a single Opposition newspaper that had been preferred to a Government organ in the giving of advertisements, that would do away with the question of "colour." But such an instance could not be given. What was the result? He said deliberately that the Government money was being used for the purpose of furthering a certain class of political views, and that, as this was being done in accordance with the doctrine of "the spoils to the victors," it was degrading to our politics, and a disgrace to us as a Government and a country. Now, it had been said that some of the newspapers that were not on the list were in the habit of getting advertisements: if that were so, then

Mr. Ward

he could only say that the list was inaccurate. If some of the newspapers that were not upon this list did occasionally get Government advertisements there must be a list of those that did not get Government advertisements at all, and this applied to the bankruptcy advertisements. The Premier had read out another list, and he supposed this second list of newspapers would appear in *Hansard* as if that list contained the newspapers that formerly got the advertisements. That was entirely inaccurate. What had happened was this: The honourable gentleman had taken from the Post Office records a list of all papers registered as newspapers, and shoved them in the list as if they all were given the advertisements. Several of the newspapers on that list had never published a single Government advertisement.

Mr. SEDDON said there might be some on the other list that had not got any.

Sir R. STOUT said that if so the Government officers must not have obeyed their masters, and he did not suppose they would do that. That put him in mind of a remark the honourable gentleman had made, and that was that formerly they gave the Government advertisements without Ministerial supervision. If that were so the blame for that must be on the management of the particular department in question. They had no right to allow Government advertisements to be given, or anything to be done, without Ministerial control. This ought to be under the control of the Ministers, and if they did not manage their business properly it was their fault. He intended to give notice to move for a return—which he hoped would be supplied him—of copies of circulars and instructions sent to all Government officers regarding the insertion of advertisements; and from this return they would see what discretion was left to the Government officers by the Ministers when this list was given.

Motion for adjournment negatived.

GAMING BILL.

A message was received from the Legislative Council insisting on their amendments in regard to clause 7 of this Bill, and covering reasons for so insisting.

Sir R. STOUT moved, That Mr. Lawry, Mr. Bell, and the mover be the Managers of a Conference with the Legislative Council.

Mr. LAWRY moved, That the name of Mr. G. Hutchison be substituted for that of Mr. Bell.

The House divided on the question, "That the name of Mr. Bell be retained."

AYES, 17.

Allen	Mitchelson	Smith, G. J.
Buchanan	Newman	Stout
Collins	O'Regan	Te Ao
Heke	Pere	<i>Tellers.</i>
Hutchison, W.	Pirani	Earnshaw
Massey	Russell, G. W.	Tanner.

Buddo	Noes, 33.	Millar
Buick	Hall-Jones	Morrison
Carncross	Harris	Parata
Carnell	Houston	Pinkerton
Crowther	Lang	Seddon
Duncan	Lawry	Steward
Flatman	McGowan	Thompson
Fraser	McGuire	Ward.
Graham	McKenzie, J.	<i>Tellers.</i>
Green	McLachlan	McKenzie, R.
Guinness	McNab	Mills.
	Meredith	

Majority against, 15.

Mr. Bell's name struck out.

Mr. J. MCKENZIE moved, That the name of Mr. Duncan be inserted.

The House divided on the question, "That the name of Mr. G. Hutchison be inserted."

AYES, 24.

Allen	McGuire	Smith, G. J.
Bell	McNab	Stout
Collins	Mitchelson	Tanner
Crowther	Newman	Te Ao
Fraser	O'Regan	Wilson.
Green	Pere	<i>Tellers.</i>
Heke	Pinkerton	Buchanan
Mackenzie, T.	Russell, G. W.	Earnshaw.
Massey		

NOES, 27.

Buddo	McGowan	Pirani
Buick	McKenzie, J.	Reeves
Carncross	McKenzie, R.	Seddon
Carnell	McLachlan	Steward
Graham	Meredith	Thompson
Guinness	Millar	Ward.
Houston	Mills	<i>Tellers.</i>
Hutchison, W.	Morrison	Flatman
Kelly, J. W.	Parata	Hall-Jones.
Lang		

Majority against, 3.

Amendment negatived.

Mr. MCGUIRE moved, as an amendment, That the name of Mr. J. McKenzie be inserted.

The House divided on the question, "That the name of Mr. Duncan be inserted."

AYES, 34.

Buick	Joyce	Parata
Carncross	Kelly, J. W.	Pirani
Carnell	Lang	Reeves
Collins	Lawry	Russell, G. W.
Flatman	McGowan	Seddon
Graham	McKenzie, J.	Steward
Guinness	McKenzie, R.	Thompson
Hall	McLachlan	Ward.
Hall-Jones	Meredith	<i>Tellers.</i>
Harris	Millar	Morrison
Hogg	Mills	Pinkerton.
Houston	O'Regan	

NOES, 22.

Allen	Fraser	Massey
Bell	Green	McGuire
Buddo	Heke	McNab
Crowther	Hutchison, W.	Mitchelson
Earnshaw	Mackenzie, T.	Pere

Smith, G. J. Te Ao Tellers.
Stout Wilson. Buchanan
Tanner Newman.

Majority for, 12.

Amendment agreed to, and Mr. Duncan's name inserted.

RATING ON UNIMPROVED VALUE BILL.

ADJOURNED DEBATE.

Mr. BUCHANAN.—The Treasurer, in moving the second reading of this Bill, did so very little justice to himself, and to the important subject with which this Bill deals, that I would recommend him to refer the Bill to the Statutes Revision Committee, or, preferably, to the Tariff and Industries Committee, where so many other subjects have been so effectively buried that they will never see the light again. The subject, however, is too important to be played with, and I mean, in the remarks I have to make, to treat it with the seriousness which it unquestionably deserves. The honourable gentleman absolutely gave us no information whatever as to the principles contained in the Bill.

Mr. WARD.—Yes.

Mr. BUCHANAN.—I took careful notes of what he said, and there was no reference whatever to the principles involved in the Bill, although the honourable gentleman finished his speech by saying that he had explained them to the House, and that he would now leave it in the hands of the House. Why, he spent most of his time in explaining, or attempting to explain, how the local bodies concerned were to ascertain the amount of rate in the pound on the unimproved value which would produce the same total as another given rate on the total value. I tried to follow him as well as I could, and I do not think the subject is a very intricate one, but I confess that the honourable gentleman's explanation left the subject anything but clear. I think his time would have been very much better occupied had he attempted to set down in actual figures the great difference it would make to large numbers of ratepayers occupying various classes of land, and the justification for these great differences. Let me take by way of illustration the case of two settlers each owning a property the selling-value of which at the present time, including improvements, is £9,000. Each of these properties, at a penny in the pound, is paying £97 10s. in the shape of rates. Under this Bill, supposing the local bodies interested decide to adopt it, one of these properties would be compelled to pay £53 13s. 4d., while the other would be let off with a payment of £21 6s. 8d.

Mr. WARD.—You mean on the unimproved values.

Mr. BUCHANAN.—Yes; because, as I was proceeding to explain, the improvements in one case amounted only to £1,500, leaving £7,500 as the unimproved value, while in the case of the other property the improvements amounted to £6,000, with a consequent unimproved value of only £3,000.

Mr. WARD.—That accounts for the difference.

Mr. BUCHANAN.—That accounts for the difference; and when I tell the honourable gentleman that the small amount of improvement in one case is solely because the poverty of the soil makes further improvement impracticable,—that as a matter of fact both these properties are improved to the highest point justifiable by the nature and the extent of the produce which can be got from each,—perhaps he will explain in his reply what justification he can show to this House or the country for unjustly punishing the owner of the comparatively unimproved land to the extent of compelling him to pay two and a half times more than the owner of the improvable and better-class land. In the case of the inferior property, the position is bad enough as it is, because the road leading to it is impracticable for drags in the winter, and it is not likely to be much better for many years to come; while the other property has a good road up to it, and is within easy reach of the railway and telegraph-office, and other conveniences which the public-works policy has given us: and yet this is the manner in which the other owner is to be punished under this Bill. Now let us take the case of other two properties in the colony, worth £4,000 each—one of them improved to the extent of two-sevenths of its total value, and the other to the extent of two-thirds. In the case of these two properties, one of them would pay £22 14s. in rates, while the other would pay only £10 12s. Now, any fair-minded man would wish to reverse the relative amount of rates I have given, because poor land as a rule means bad roads, while good land on the other hand means good roads. Let me put a still more extreme case. I know a hotel property in my district worth about £2,100, and close alongside of it is a country settler's property worth about the same money; the unimproved value of the land on which the hotel stands is about £100, while the improvements on the other property are about 50 per cent. of its total value. How would these two properties be affected by the provisions of this Bill? The hotel property would pay £1 10s. in rates, while the property of the settler alongside would pay £16.

Mr. REEVES.—The hotelkeeper might have his license taken away.

Mr. BUCHANAN.—I am not dealing with the question of licenses, and the honourable gentleman knows it. When the honourable gentleman himself speaks he can take up that question. It has been pointed out that this Bill is only optional—that the ratepayers in each case can decide for themselves whether it is to come into operation or not. But that is one of its worst features. None of us can doubt how the ratepayers in country districts, speaking generally, will deal with the question. We know that the more improvable class of properties carry the heaviest vote, because the more improvable they are the smaller are the areas into which they are cut up, and when the question is put to the vote the more numerous

class of ratepayers will naturally relieve themselves at the expense of the outlying districts. I say most emphatically, if this Bill becomes law we shall have injustices perpetrated throughout the country such as have never been brought about before under any system of local government. I cannot understand members of this House calmly looking on and allowing this Bill to pass. I am just as anxious as any man to rate the unimproving landowner who wilfully stands in the way of settlement; but we ought not to favour one class of ratepayers more than another, and that is what will happen if this Bill is brought into operation in any local-governing district. And when the maximum vote is reduced from five to three, or perhaps even less than that, the position of the unfortunate settler who occupies poor unimprovable land will be still worse. I can well understand the Government on these benches pushing such a Bill as this forward. They care nothing for justice. They simply play up to the gallery, and bid for votes at the next general election. The Wairarapa County Council some time ago issued a circular to the various local bodies throughout the colony, inviting an expression of opinion as to whether or not local rating should be upon the unimproved value, and I have the result here before me. Out of over two hundred and seventy local bodies in the colony, replies were received from only sixty-five, and out of that number only thirty-two were favourable. I should like to ask the Colonial Treasurer, who sits smiling before me, at whose instance did the Government bring in this Bill? Has it emanated from the country districts or from the towns? Have the Government had any demand for it from the local bodies?

Mr. WARD.—Yes.

Mr. BUCHANAN.—The results of the circular I have mentioned are proofs to the contrary; and I think, if the Government had been pressed to pass such a Bill as this, we should have heard of it long ago.

Mr. SEDDON.—Ask the honourable member for Inangahua.

Mr. BUCHANAN.—I see that honourable gentleman poring over a multitude of papers, and I suppose we shall hear from him presently.

Mr. O'REGAN.—Oh, yes.

Mr. BUCHANAN.—I have already shown how unfairly this Bill would work if brought into operation in the country districts; and now let me take the case of the towns and cities. I am certain that in these, even more than in the country districts, this Bill would play into the hands of the rich, and fall most heavily upon those who are least able to pay heavy rates. The banks and large mercantile establishments will be relieved from the payment of large sums of money which they are called upon at present to pay, and the owners of sections alongside with modest cottages erected upon them will have to pay double and treble what they do now. Of course, the argument always used in favour of such a Bill is that it catches the absentee and the man who does not improve his land; but my reply is

that the man who does not improve his land is already under punishment for every day's delay, for he not only gets no profit from it, but is paying interest and compound interest upon the purchase-money, and in his own interest he is bound to improve as soon as he possibly can do so. I admit that it is very galling to a man to have neighbours about him who do nothing to improve their property, but such a position of affairs must necessarily be very temporary indeed, for the simple reason that self-interest is always at work impelling a man to make use of his land. I have spent some time trying to satisfy myself as to what the real meaning of section 9 is, and the only meaning I can gather from it is that, if any single local body in a county determines to adopt the provisions of the Bill, then all the other local bodies in that county must also do so, no matter how strongly opposed they may be to it. The clause is very badly drafted, and, if the meaning of it be what I have indicated, then it is another blot upon the Bill. I trust the House will not pass the second reading; and, if it does, it will be my duty to oppose it as far as I can at all further stages.

Mr. HEKE.—In the short discussion which took place on the second reading of this Bill the other night I asked the Colonial Treasurer that the Bill should be put into Maori before it was proceeded with, as it will affect Native lands. I make this appeal so that my Maori colleagues may understand the provisions of this Bill. The Colonial Treasurer promised that it would be put into Maori.

Mr. WARD.—Not this Bill; the other Bill. This Bill does not affect the Natives at all.

Sir R. STOUT.—Oh, yes, it does.

Mr. HEKE.—I asked whether this Bill was intended to affect Native lands, and the Colonial Treasurer said Yes. I therefore put the question to him, whether the Bill would be put into Maori; and the honourable gentleman's answer was Yes. It is only fair he should see that it is put into Maori before it is proceeded with. There is no doubt whatever that this Bill does affect Native lands. In clause 1 of the Bill it says that it is to be read and construed with "The Rating Act, 1893," or the consolidated Rating Bill of 1894. If that is so, then I say it does specially affect Native lands.

Mr. SEDDON.—As to the point raised by the honourable gentleman, this Bill does not specially affect the Native race, and the Standing Orders quoted would not apply to it.

Dr. NEWMAN.—This Bill does considerably affect the Native race. The Premier may say what he pleases, but I am confident the honourable member (Mr. Heke) is entirely right in what he says. If this Bill is brought into force the Native lands within a certain radius will be taxed. This Bill undoubtedly does affect the Natives. I should like to suggest to the honourable member in charge of the Bill that it is necessary to insert one or two safeguards in it. This Bill would undoubtedly do good in the case of districts in some of the southern counties, where nearly all the land

is unimproved, and where unimproved properties ought to be rated. I think the Bill would also work exceedingly well in brand-new counties, where all the properties are unimproved; but there are several counties where two-thirds or one-half of the land is highly improved, and where the rest is not improved. Now, if a highly-cultivated and old-settled district escaped all the taxation upon improvements it would be shunted on to the district which had not the same voting-power, and some of the new districts would suffer very much in consequence. If two-thirds of a district highly improved brought the Act into force all the people in the new portion of the district—all those who are poor and struggling, and cannot afford to pay higher rates—will be unduly taxed under this Bill, and the richer portion will escape taxation. Therefore I think the limits should be very jealously guarded. I think the tendency of most countries is to let improvements escape, but safeguards will have to be provided to prevent undue taxation being imposed upon poor people who are improving their land to the best of their ability, and who have not the same voting-power as others who could bring the Bill into operation. I should like, also, to point out to the Colonial Treasurer that it was only the other night he was strongly opposed to the Referendum and the "initiative." Now, there is practically a form of initiative in clause 4. So many people can petition to have this law brought into force, and therein lies a perfectly new departure. I think there are several clauses of this Bill which require revision, and it would be made a better Bill if the honourable gentleman would refer it to some Committee first, instead of to a Committee of the whole House.

8.30. Mr. HEKE.—I wish to ask the Colonial Treasurer if he will have this Bill translated into Maori before it is proceeded with.

Mr. WARD.—There is practically nothing in the Bill which affects the Natives. You might just as well ask that the Criminal Code Bill or any other Bill introduced into this House should be translated into Maori.

Mr. HEKE.—I am perfectly satisfied, if the Minister in charge of the Bill gives me his assurance that this Bill does not affect Native land. I will simply leave it to my colleague on my right to say whether he thinks the Bill should be gone on with, or whether it is a Bill which should be put into Maori for the consideration of the Native members. As far as I am concerned personally, I have no objection to the Bill being proceeded with. In reference to the Minister's remark about the Criminal Code Bill, well, all I can say is this: Had I been in this House last session when the Bill was introduced there is no doubt whatever I should have endeavoured to get everything that was intended to affect the Natives put into Maori, so that all the Maori members might understand what was going on.

Mr. PARATA.—May I ask what is the meaning of the word "unimproved"? I suppose if any Natives hold land which is unimproved it

must come under this Bill. I should like the Government to insert a clause to say that the Bill will not apply to Native lands.

Mr. SEDDON.—In the Rating Act it is there defined what lands are rateable, and, this Bill being a portion of the main Act, the provisions in the main Act will apply. There is nothing special here as regards the Natives.

Mr. McGUIRE.—I think the Government should certainly take some notice of what has been said by the honourable member who represents one of the northern constituencies of the Natives. This Bill applies in the same way in regard to Native land as the Bill referred to by the honourable member for the Southern Maori District.

Mr. WARD.—The Natives are not rated at all.

Mr. McGUIRE.—They are, within five miles of any main road and where their land has been individualised. I think the same consideration which has been given to one Native member should be extended to the other, although the honourable member for the Northern Maori District does not on every occasion support the Government.

Mr. WARD.—The same consideration will be and has been given.

Mr. McGUIRE.—I do not think the honourable gentleman has done so this evening.

Mr. PIRANI.—I do not think a Bill of this importance should be allowed to go through without some discussion, and therefore I rise to give my hearty support to the Bill. I support it the more willingly because the late Mr. Ballance always advocated it, and stated that it was the necessary complement to his policy of taxing the unimproved value through the State taxation. I say this is of even more importance to the small improving settler than taxing through the land- and income-tax, because, while as a rule the small settlers were exempted from direct taxation under the old property-tax, by the rise in value of land, and by the improvements made year by year, the local taxation has become a great burden. I notice that the honourable member for Wellington Suburbs said that the inhabitants of the richer portion of a district would be able, by bringing this Bill into force, to put heavier burdens upon those holding unimproved land, or upon the newer settlers. He forgot that in the richer portions of a district the unimproved values are much higher than in the unsettled portions, and that it is in the richer portions of a district where there are unimproved sections that the greater burden of such a measure as this will be felt. In towns, for instance, there are people holding land for speculative purposes—holding it either unimproved or with little shanties upon it. They will feel more heavily the burdens placed upon them by rating on the unimproved values. I know that in many country districts land is held in large areas, and I might almost instance the case of the honourable member for Wairarapa's own holding, the unimproved value of which, I see, is £56,000, while the improved value is £86,000. I have no doubt

Dr. Newman

ettlers like the honourable gentleman will feel the change very much; but it is only right that those people who hold large estates, and who have them only comparatively slightly improved, should pay something more towards the making of roads and bridges, and towards the settlement of their district, than those who have small holdings and who are improving them largely. The honourable member for Wairarapa says that I am wrong in regard to his property. I take my statements from the land-tax returns. If they are wrong, that is a matter for the Land-tax Commissioner. But, according to those returns, the figures are exactly as I have stated. Of course I did not mean to make a personal accusation. I was only instancing that the large estates will have to pay more heavily under this new system of taxation, and I think it is only proper that those large estates which are not improved to the same extent as smaller holdings of fifty or a hundred acres should pay as fair a proportion of rates to the local bodies as the small estates. I trust the Minister will push the Bill through and have it embodied into law, so as to give the relief to the small holders which has hitherto been given to the large holders under the taxation system of the colony.

Mr. PERE.—I have heard the Premier remark that this Bill does not affect the Maori land. If that is so, I should like the Premier to insert in the Bill a clause to that effect, so that all difficulty in connection with this Bill may cease on the part of the Natives. On the other hand, if this Bill does affect Native lands, I think it would be better that the Colonial Treasurer should agree to the proposal of the honourable member for the Northern Maori District to have the Bill translated into Maori, so that the Native members may have an opportunity of considering the provisions of the Bill.

Mr. T. MACKENZIE.—I have not studied this Bill, as I expected it would go before the Statutes Revision Committee. I have listened patiently to-night to hear one single argument advanced in favour of the Bill.

Mr. O'REGAN.—You will hear something presently.

Mr. T. MACKENZIE.—The honourable member says I shall hear something presently. We know he is a sensible man on most subjects, but when he touches the question of land he really goes off his head. His one object in life is the single-tax. He believes that all taxation should be raised from the land, and that no other source or form of wealth in the country should be taxed at all. I venture to say if we adopted that system of taxation we should so cripple the productive energies of our agriculturists as to interfere with the successful occupation of the land. I entirely disagree with the system of taxing one form of wealth. I consider that people ought to be taxed in proportion to their ability to pay rather than that we should tax wealth in any particular form. Of course the honourable gentleman is theoretical, and we shall get theory from him; but theory will never carry to a successful conclu-

sion either the industrial or agricultural occupation of the country. The honourable member for Palmerston stated that he supported this Bill because it is a complement of the scheme introduced by the late Mr. Ballance. He may be a great admirer of that gentleman, and I believe in some respects in that admiration he is justified; but to support a change in the incidence of taxation simply because some other gentleman introduced a scheme dealing with other forms of taxation on property is, to my mind, no argument at all. He states that people holding land in the towns for speculation will then be heavily rated. I would ask the honourable member if lands in the towns are not at the present time just as well occupied as they ought to be. I would ask him whether that land is not built upon quite as closely as the country can support. What earthly use is there of bringing in a system of taxation which will tax as heavily the unimproved sections in the towns as you would the improved sections? If the buildings were behind the requirements of the period you might urge a system of taxation of this sort. But our towns are now overbuilt, and this would levy excessive taxation on lands that could not be profitably built on in any other way at present. Then, the honourable gentleman states that the honourable member for Wairarapa opposes this because it may call upon him to pay an extra amount of taxation. If the honourable gentleman is anything in this House he is personal; he always selects a member of the Opposition and applies personal remarks to him.

Mr. PIRANI.—I said nothing of the sort. The honourable gentleman is entirely misrepresenting me, and I think the honourable member for Wairarapa will bear me out.

Mr. T. MACKENZIE.—I took the honourable gentleman's words down. He said, "The honourable member for Wairarapa, and settlers like him, would feel this change very heavily." If the honourable gentleman's language meant to convey anything at all, it meant that the honourable member for Wairarapa, under this new system, would suffer by the change. But the honourable member is, like other members in this House, one who, if once he makes a statement and finds it being turned against him, does not hesitate for one moment to say that that was not his statement at all. It is a method I do not commend. If the honourable gentleman finds his arguments are subject after crucial analysis to an interpretation he did not mean to attach to them he ought to have sufficient experience to know he must be subject to criticism. It annoys him to have his fallacies exposed. Let us apply his argument to gentlemen like the honourable member for Wairarapa, and I venture to say that that honourable gentleman will profit by this change of taxation, because his land is capable of very great improvement, and has been largely improved; but the man who will suffer is the man who may have a property in behind that of the honourable gentleman which is not capable of improvement at all—he will get no reduction.

And this is what I deprecate in this legislation : that you will tax a man who is getting a large income from valuable land, whose improvements represent three-fourths of the value, only on one-fourth of the value; while a farmer with the same area of land, but not capable of further improvement, will have to pay just as much taxation. I consider that unjust. Then, the honourable gentleman said that small settlers would benefit largely by this change in the incidence of taxation. I suppose by that I am to understand him to mean the settlers in poorer circumstances. If that is so, I say this goes distinctly against assisting men of this character. Let us take two men taking up bush-land in the honourable gentleman's own district. They may each take up the same area. One may have to depend upon his own toil and his family's toil to make his improvements, and the other has £5,000 or £6,000 in the bank, and uses that to improve his property. The wealthy man has no more to pay than his poorer neighbour. He has no more taxation placed upon him, although he has £6,000 more wealth on his farm, and is getting a much larger income from it; he pays no more taxation than his poor neighbour, who has not the means at first to clear the whole of the land.

Mr. PIRANI.—Why should he?

Mr. T. MACKENZIE.—The honourable gentleman is not aware of the basis—of the first principles—of taxation. If he were he would understand that a man should pay in proportion to his ability to pay—in proportion to his wealth. That is the just system of taxation. If one man has a farm worth £1,000 and another a farm worth £6,000, it is not just that the man with the £1,000 unimproved or partially improved farm should pay as much as the one with the £6,000 improved farm. I see the honourable member for Inangahua taking copious notes, and no doubt he will make an eloquent and impassioned speech. It is a subject he has been preparing for years to deliver himself upon.

Mr. O'REGAN.—I could not devote myself to a better cause.

Mr. T. MACKENZIE.—Perhaps not. I think I have disposed of nearly all the remarks of the honourable member for Palmerston. With regard to the honourable member for Wellington Suburbs, I was rather astonished to think he should support the Bill, because, at any rate, he ought to have adopted some firm principles, considering the time he has been connected with parliamentary work. This is one of those pernicious measures we are having constantly foisted on us by the present Government. They will not leave the people and the colony alone. Every industry is threatened. A man cannot launch forth either in land or in manufacture without having these pernicious interfering measures thrust on the country. The Colonial Treasurer is a man who possesses common-sense, and who knows quite well this measure is not a good one; but he is, no doubt, compelled by his followers—gentlemen like the honourable member for Inangahua and the

impracticable member for Palmerston—he is compelled by those honourable gentlemen to introduce a measure which he in his own heart fully hopes will never pass. And here is another point I should like to mention. Although the Bill makes it optional, and a majority of votes is required before it comes into operation, yet the voting-power is largely in the hands of the town districts. Or, if a district has a lot of good land and perhaps only one-third of poor land, the rich landowners can have the system adopted. I see no reason, therefore, why a majority should compel the minority to carry out a change of this character. I do not intend to take up the time of the House any longer. I regret not having heard a single argument in favour of the Bill, and I regret to think that the Minister should fall back for protection on an honourable gentleman who was also governed by theory, and, so far as the rating question is concerned, had not the slightest idea or conception of the proper methods to adopt.

Mr. HOGG.—The honourable member for Clutha has stated that he has not heard a single argument in favour of the Bill. I intend to furnish him with one or two before I sit down. He said that it was a pernicious interference with the people and their rights. If I thought for a moment the Bill was of such a character I should not support it; but I am under the impression that this Bill is really an extension of our system of local government. So far from restricting the rights of the people it places a very large amount of power in the hands of the people that they never enjoyed before. What does it do? It hands over to the ratepayers to a great extent the power of saying under what system they prefer to be taxed. We have had an extension of the very principle suggested in the Bill in connection with general taxation. We have a land-tax imposed in exchange for a property-tax, and I believe the result of that experiment is such that it has occasioned a very considerable demand on the part of the ratepayers for the change now contemplated in this measure. It is intended to enable the ratepayers to say whether they will adhere to the present system of taxation, which is levied on land and improvements, or fall back on a system similar to that introduced by the State and levy a land-tax. I think there is very little doubt that the people of New Zealand are gradually arriving at the conclusion that the system of local taxation is unfair and unequal—because what do we find? We find that under the present system of local taxation the harder a man works, the more he spends on his property, the more severely he is taxed. He is really punished because of his thrift, his enterprise, and industry. That is what local taxation means. Take the case of a man who purchases a bush section. If he chooses to employ labour to have his bush felled, to grass his land, erect fences, and to put up buildings, the more money he spends in this direction the more he has to contribute to the local body. Then, take the case of his neighbour who buys land as a matter of

Mr. T. Mackenzie

speculation. He spends nothing on it—not even his own labour—and the result is that he is almost exempt from taxation. The man who improves his property has to construct roads, build bridges, and improve the property around him in every way; but the man who stands still and waits for the unearned increment is not called upon to pay his fair share of taxation. That is where the system of local taxation is unfair and unequal. There is not the slightest doubt that a great deal can be said both for and against the principle that is involved. It is stated that it is very unfair to call on a bush-settler immediately he takes up land, and before he has made it productive, to pay a large amount of taxation; and that it would be fair to call upon the man with improved property, whose property has become reproductive, to pay a much greater share than the man who is struggling to make both ends meet, and to bring his property to the paying point. For my own part, I should like to see the man who settles on land exempted altogether during the first years of settlement; but, unfortunately, the local bodies cannot dispense with taxation. It should be left to the local bodies to modify the system if they find it necessary. There is not the slightest doubt the majority of local bodies, so far as can be ascertained, are in favour of something of this character. Within the last twelve months the North Wairarapa County Council—one of the largest in the district I represent—passed a resolution in favour of being empowered to levy taxation on the unimproved value of property in that county. And the same body sent circulars to a large number of local bodies, asking if they would support proposals for rating for local purposes on unimproved values. I have here a list of the replies they received. From the great majority they received no replies, but, of those that did reply,—I have here a list prepared by the County Clerk, and thoroughly authenticated,—I find that the number of local bodies favourable to the proposal was thirty-two, and the number unfavourable was thirteen; while the number which sent replies of a neutral character was twenty. Out of sixty-five bodies that sent replies, thirty-two, or about one-half, were favourable to the proposal, and only thirteen against it. I think that is a sufficient reply to the arguments advanced against the Bill, and I think it is a very cogent reason why the local bodies of New Zealand should have the power placed in their hands that is intended to be imparted by this Bill. My own impression is that the substitution of a land-tax for local purposes for a property-tax will be of material benefit to the settlers of New Zealand as a body. It will be an encouragement to thrift and industry, and will do a great deal to help not only the settlers but the labouring-classes generally.

Mr. O'REGAN.—Sir, I rise to give this Bill my hearty support. The honourable member for Clutha said he had heard no arguments in favour of the Bill, and I shall attempt to give him a few. In the first place, I should have much preferred to see the Bill made compul-

sory, as was the Land- and Income-tax Act three years ago. However, there is no doubt that if the Treasurer attempted to make it compulsory there would be greater difficulty in passing it under existing circumstances; and, more than that, I can hardly object to the principle of allowing the ratepayers to decide, as it affirms the great democratic principle which all true Liberals should support, of trusting the people. But it may be argued that the franchise in this case is really too narrow, and with that I certainly agree. I see no reason why everybody on the roll should be allowed to vote on the licensing question, and yet on the important question of taxation the vote should be confined to rate-

9.0. payors. I would much prefer to see the electors decide the question, instead of the ratepayers. However, with the main principle of the Bill I thoroughly agree, and on that account I am going to support it. And here let me compliment the Colonial Treasurer upon the manner in which this Bill has been drafted. He has indeed shown incontrovertible proof of the soundness of the principle which the Bill affirms, and in the drafting of the Bill he has given us a mathematical demonstration of the fact. I do not wish to flatter the honourable gentleman, but I am bound to say, in principle, that even Henry George himself could not have drafted a more logical Bill than this. Now, what are the arguments against this Bill? There are really no arguments at all, because I cannot dignify the objections we have heard from the other side by the name of arguments. And before I proceed I should like to correct an erroneous impression that seems to obtain in the minds of some honourable members regarding this Bill. Judging by the manner in which the honourable member for Clutha spoke, one would think this Bill is entirely new. I need hardly remind that honourable gentleman that the principle which this Bill affirms was embodied in the Bill of last session; but the vital clause in that measure was expunged in another place. Then, I find, on looking up the records, that, as far back as 1876, an amendment to a similar Bill was proposed by my honourable friend the member for Auckland City (Mr. Button) which affirmed precisely the same principle as that contained in this Bill. On that occasion Mr. Button divided the House, and I understand that honourable gentleman is still of the same opinion as to the principle of the Bill as he was then. I find also that this Bill, or a similar one, rather, has been in force in Queensland for the last four years; and, stranger still, it was brought down and passed by a Conservative Ministry—that of Sir Thomas McIlwraith. It was passed in the face of the most strenuous opposition; and, with regard to the effect which that measure has had in that colony, I have obtained some information from a gentleman who is resident in Queensland, through whose instrumentality I have also been able to obtain a copy of the Act in operation there. This gentleman, writing about the operation of the measure, says,—

“The Act has had the most beneficial effect.

Lots which under the old system were vacant are now built upon. Our experience has been that the Act has encouraged building and other branches of industry; it has improved the appearance of our towns, and, better than all, while it has given us a superior class of buildings, it has greatly reduced house-rents."

I think any one who studies the question must see that a measure of this kind will have that effect. It is really remarkable to hear how the honourable gentlemen opposite, in opposing this Bill, talk of "the poor farmers," and endeavour to make them the sole consideration, as if the poor farmers were the only people who owned land in the colony. We hear nothing about the large landowners, but the poor farmer is made the stalking-horse which those honourable gentlemen so often ride to death. What they overlook is that the farmers are not the only men who own land. There are people who own far more valuable land than the agricultural and pastoral lands in the country—namely, the lands in the cities—and it is to the owners of those lands that this Bill will have special application. I think it is a monstrous thing that there is such a number of vacant lots in the towns. I passed a vacant lot in this city, in Willis Street, the other day. The owner of that lot has put no buildings or improvements upon it, unless you can call a "merry-go-round" an improvement. Yet he is demanding £14 a foot for that land. I think it is a crying shame that a man should, as is the case under the present system, be allowed to play "dog in the manger" with the people's birthright. And if you inquire as to the adjacent lands, with buildings upon them, you will find that the owners of those buildings are fined for their enterprise as though they were drunkards or wife-beaters. We hear a great deal about encouraging the industry of the farmers; but are we going to encourage this dog-in-the-manger system under which landowners are not called upon to pay their fair share of rates? Sir, the honourable member for Clutha was very humorous, and I have to compliment him on the capital burlesque speech he made. I do not feel indignant with the honourable gentleman for what he said, because he cannot be taken seriously. I know he is a past-master in the art of acting, and I think he would make a very good comedian if he followed that profession. I should, however, advise the honourable gentleman, when dealing with faddists like myself, to know first what he is talking about. He says that I advocate that the land, and no other source of wealth, should be taxed. But let me tell him that there is no other source of wealth than the land. That is an elementary fact in political economy which the honourable gentleman has overlooked. I have heard, Sir, some people advocate the inclusion of the subject of political economy in our school curriculum, and I am inclined to think that is a very good idea. But if we do include political economy in the curriculum of our schools some of our legislators should be the first to take lessons. The honourable gentleman also

says that lands in our towns are as fully occupied as they should be. Well, I have seen enough, myself, to know that this is not the case. The rate of house-rents in towns, the number of vacant sections, and the want of improvements on every side are a sufficient answer to such a ridiculous assertion. My honourable friend the member for Palmerston, while supporting the Bill, fell into one slight error. He said that under the old system of property-tax the small settlers were exempted. It is true there was a £500 exemption on all properties; but was that an exemption in reality? It was no exemption at all, for the property-tax fell upon improvements, and upon goods and merchandise, and other articles that would be included in the term "improvements." It fell upon these things, and the owner of them added the taxation to their price, in the same manner as is done with Customs duties. So, in reality, the poor people who were supposed to be exempt under the property-tax were bearing all the burdens. There was no exemption at all, practically. This principle of taxation is a good deal older than the settlement of this colony. The principle which this Bill affirms was advocated before the French Revolution by a school of political economists, headed by Quesnay and others, called Physiocrats, and their theory was described by the great Mirabeau as an invention equal in utility to the discovery of printing or the substitution of money for barter. And the same theory has been advocated more or less by the standard political economists. I go back to the author of "The Wealth of Nations," Adam Smith. I find that, on page 670, he says,—

"Ground-rents are a still more proper subject of taxation than a tax upon houses. It would fall altogether upon the owner of the ground-rent, who acts always as a monopolist, and extracts the greatest rent which can be got for the use of his ground. More or less can be got for it according as the competitors happen to be richer or poorer, or can afford to gratify their fancy for a particular spot of ground at a greater or a smaller expense. In every country the greatest number of rich competitors is in the capital, and it is there accordingly that the highest ground-rents are always to be found. As the wealth of those competitors would in no respect be increased by a tax upon ground-rents, they would not, probably, be disposed to pay more for the use of the ground. Whether the tax was to be advanced by the inhabitant or by the owner of the ground would be of little importance. The more the inhabitant was obliged to pay for the tax the less he would incline to pay for the ground; so that the final payment of the tax would fall altogether upon the owner of the ground-rent."

That is, I think, a sufficient explanation of the cry we have often heard in this House and out of it about confiscation. There is no confiscation involved, though that is the stereotyped cry of those who oppose taxation of this kind. In reality, the cry of confiscation has its origin in the fact that landowners see that it is impossible to evade this tax as indirect

Mr. O'Regan

taxes are evaded by merchants and dealers, who pay them in the first instance, but add them to the price of their commodities. When tariffs are introduced, do the mercantile classes say anything of confiscation? Certainly not, and the reason is that they know how easy it is to make the unsuspecting consumer pay all. A by no means infrequent objection to the taxation of land-values is that it would add to rents, as landowners would add the amount of the tax to their tenants' rents. This is not so, because the taxation, by bringing unused land into use, would slacken the demand for land, and so enable tenants to make their own terms. But, in reality, the first to perceive that it is not possible to pass this tax on to the tenant are the landowners themselves: else why talk of confiscation? My opponents are on the horns of a dilemma whichever way they turn. If the tax can be evaded the fallacy of the confiscation cry is admitted. The taxation of land-values is the real preventive of reckless land-speculation. It is the only way to put land to the best use. It is the only way to hold out an incentive to industry, and to untrammel commerce. It is the only way to insure good homes for working-men, by reducing house-rents, which is an important matter to all classes, but to the workers especially. I have heard honourable gentlemen advocating a Fair Rent Bill, but such a Bill would be quite superfluous with a law of this kind in existence, which would prevent unfair valuations, and, at the same time, make those pay for public works who receive the benefit. The objection raised by the owners is, of course, on the ground that it will bring down house-rents, which are now monstrously high. That is an important question to all classes of the community, and especially to those who are entitled to our first consideration—the poor. Sir, there is not the slightest objection, there can be no argument whatever, against a tax of this kind. Its justice has always been admitted, and even by some of the honourable gentlemen opposite. The honourable member for Wellington City (Mr. Bell) is pledged to it. I find that is so by looking up his election speeches. The Bill is demanded by the country, and should, had justice been done, have been law long ago. It embodies what I have long fought for; and, let it please or displease whom it may, I have the greatest pleasure in supporting it.

Sir K. STOUT.—Sir, I wish to point out to the House what this Bill really means, because so far as the financial aspect of the question is concerned it has not been touched on by a single member who has spoken. I will take the boroughs first. The value of landed property in the boroughs of New Zealand, taking the valuation of 1891, amounts, with improvements, to thirty-six million four hundred and eighty-six thousand pounds' worth of property—that is, the land with the improvements. Improvements amount to a little over half—namely, £18,442,562—leaving the land without improvements at nearly £18,000,000. Then, if we take the counties, we find that the

total value, with improvements, comes to nearly £86,000,000; the improvements amount to nearly £28,000,000, leaving a balance of the value of land without improvements of about £58,000,000. What would be the effect of this Bill in the towns? In the towns you will exempt from taxation under this Bill eighteen million pounds' worth of property; and in the counties you will exempt, in round numbers, twenty-eight million pounds' worth of property. So that in the whole colony you will exempt forty-six million pounds' worth of property from taxation. That is to say, you will lessen the area of taxation by that amount. Now, what does this mean? It means, of course, that the burden of taxation is placed on the remaining properties—namely, on the unimproved value, which in the counties will amount to £58,000,000, and in the towns to about £18,000,000. How will that affect the towns? Honourable members say that it will be a great help to the poor. I say, on the contrary, it will be no help to the poor whatever. I will show, Sir, how it will act, and I will take as an illustration the City of Wellington, where there are both improved and unimproved lands. Say the value of a piece of land is £10,000, and the buildings are worth £30,000. Under this Bill the £30,000 is to escape taxation, and you leave this £10,000 to pay the taxes. Now, we will assume, for example, that the rate is charged on the capital value. If the present rate of 1d. in the pound is now sufficient, under the new *régime*, as you are exempting half the property from taxation, you will require a twopenny rate. Those people in the cities who formerly paid 1d. in the pound on £40,000, will have to pay 2d. in the pound on £10,000—that is, they pay £167 under the present law, but under this new law they would only pay £83 a year instead of £167. So that your banks and large offices in the centre of the town, your large warehouses, your mercantile buildings, would get off about half their rates, and some of them more than half their rates. Take the Government Insurance building, for example. According to its value, it would get off about two-thirds of its rates. Now, what would happen to the small holder, we will say, in Newtown, in the suburbs? If you take a small holder in the suburbs you will find that his improvements are only about half the value of his land. I have had various cases taken out in illustration, and I find that to be about it. Now, if the rates have to be doubled—and they will have to be doubled, because you exempt these large amounts of property from taxation—the result will be that, so far as the small holder in the suburbs is concerned, he will pay exactly the same rate as he does at the present day. He gets no benefit from this Bill. The result of the Bill,—I am approaching it first from a city point of view,—so far as the cities are concerned, is this: that small holders get no exemption whatever—they will not get their rates lessened by one farthing. The only people that will be exempted from taxation will be those who have

large offices—warehouses, banks, or insurance offices, and all large buildings in the centre of the city.

Mr. O'REGAN.—Not at all.

Sir R. STOUT.—I have given examples which the honourable gentleman cannot controvert.

Mr. O'REGAN.—I regret I cannot follow you.

Sir R. STOUT.—I am sorry for that, because if the honourable gentleman were able to follow my argument he would appreciate it. Now, the position is this—I have given one illustration; I will give another, if the honourable member desires it. Take, for example, the Government Insurance Buildings in Wellington. The value of the buildings, when completed, I understand, will be about £40,000. If you had that land free from buildings you could not get more than £16,000 for it. That is what it sold for in what may be termed the "boom" times—comparing land-values then and now. That makes a total value of land and buildings of £56,000; and what do you do under this Bill? You exempt £40,000 of the value from taxation, and you leave the tax on the £16,000. Now, the rates, naturally, would have to be doubled—that is to say, the £16,000 would pay 2d. instead of the £56,000 paying 1d. Here, again, you are exempting not the small but the large people from taxation. The only people who will pay increased rates will be those who have no buildings on the land at all. I come to deal with that.

Mr. O'REGAN.—A very good thing too.

Sir R. STOUT.—I say buildings are not a very good thing, and I will show why, because, in a question like this, you have to look all round it; it will not do to try to settle it by running your pen through a paper. Let us see how it affects buildings. Some say that in our cities we ought to have more buildings, and that it is a shame to leave spaces in the cities unbuilt on. I say the opposite. I say we ought to have more open spaces in our towns than we have. We ought to look to the health of the people, and, so far as that is concerned, I would pass a law that not more than a certain number of people should live on an acre. I would have our towns spread. I believe that one of the causes of sickness in towns is that we have, even in the new towns of New Zealand, too many people crowded on an acre section. Very well: how is that to be met?

Mr. O'REGAN.—Spread them out.

Sir R. STOUT.—If the honourable member will be kind enough to wait till I have done, he can spread himself out. Let me say what that means. I will point out what it means. The honourable member says, "Spread them out," but you will not get them spread out with this system of taxation. What you want to get is cheap land; but it will not make the land a bit cheaper. What will happen I will point out. If you have vacant spaces in the towns they are simply the lungs of the cities, and tend to the health of the people. They are a benefit to the city, and, although a man may not be making the best use of his pro-

perty, from one point of view, in not building on it, he is making the best use of it from a citizen's point of view by letting it remain vacant. It is far better for the city to have open spaces left free of buildings than to have them covered with buildings. Why, it is no gain to the city to have the land covered with buildings, and to have reeking chimneys in the centre of the city. That is not healthy; and what is it we have to look to? We ought to look after the health of the people before everything. That ought to be the first concern of this Parliament, and of every local body; and every vacant space you have left in a city is not an injury to the city, and you have no right to tax it as if it were such. What are they struggling for at Home in the large cities? They are always struggling to get open spaces, free from buildings—breathing-spaces. Why, then, should we say that open spaces ought to be taxed because the owners have not put buildings on them? What advantage to the poor people is it that these places should be covered with buildings? And do you mean to say, in dealing with taxation, we ought not to look at how it affects the poor? I have pointed out that, so far as it affects the poor, it will leave the poor man on the outskirts of the city without any relief so far as taxation is concerned. How, then, is it going to affect his health? If you are going to close up all the vacant places, and put chimneys and factories upon them, it is doing him an injury. The vacant places are to him, practically, like public gardens—they are the breathing-spaces, the lungs, to him. Yes, Sir, there are in all cities—in Wellington, for example—crowded on an acre of land so many buildings that the children have no playground—there are no proper breathing-places for them; and I say that is a great curse in cities. If I had my way I would say that in cities there must be more open spaces; but this Bill will not secure that. On the contrary, it will go in an opposite direction, because it lays down the principle that you are to tax open spaces; and so owners will not leave these open spaces, the lungs of the city, but you will have the air polluted by the factories that are built upon them, because if they were left open spaces the owners would be subjected to some sort of penal taxation. I say there is no advantage to the city, so far as that is concerned. Now let us look at it from a country point of view. What happens in the country? I will take the case of a small farmer. Wherein is he greatly benefited? But, before referring to that, there is one class of property in the city I may refer to, and that is what may be termed the market-garden. How would that be affected? So far as the market-gardener is concerned, he has no building on his property, he only uses it as a garden, and because he uses it as a garden he will have to pay under this Bill at least one-third more taxes than he pays at the present time. Now let us see how it will affect the counties. The rate there will have to be increased one-third. I am taking the general average over the whole colony. How will that affect the small

Sir R. Stout

farmers? We will suppose the case of a small farmer the value of whose land and improvements is £2,000. Very well, if his improvements are exempt—we will suppose the improvements to be valued at £700—that will leave £1,300 of unimproved value; and I do not think that is an unfair, it is, indeed, a very fair allowance to make. Very well, what would happen to him? His rates will have to be increased one-third. Supposing his rate to be 1d. now, it will be 1½d., and he will save the magnificent sum of 16s. 8d. in the year under this Bill. But I will tell the House what class of farmers it will hurt. It will hurt that class of farmer who, unfortunately, has poor land. It will hurt him; it will penalise him.

Mr. O'REGAN.—Poor land is not of much value.

Sir R. STOUT.—The honourable member really ought to talk about something he knows something of; he does not know anything about this. He says that poor land is not of much value. I know it is not of much value; but rich land is of much value, and what would happen would be this. It will happen under this Bill that, as the rich land can be improved, undoubtedly, more than the poor land can be—more than land fit for pastoral purposes only—what will happen will be that the man who owns the poor land that can only be used for pastoral purposes will have his taxation increased, while the owner of the rich land which is capable of large improvement will really be relieved from the payment of rates. That is what is going to happen. The rich flat lands that have been improved will pay less rates under the Bill than they pay now, while the poor land that is only fit for pasture, and cannot be made fit for anything but pasture, even if double its present value were spent upon it, will pay an additional rate. So that you are in this Bill doing this: You are penalising the poor man with the poor land, and you are allowing the rich man with the rich land to escape. This is how it affects the counties. Now let me show how it affects the Native lands. It was said the Natives are not affected; but the Natives also are penalised under this Bill, and I will show how. The Natives at present have to pay half-rates if they are within five miles of a road. What will happen under this Bill? The Natives are not skilled agriculturists like the Europeans. It will take generations, perhaps, to make them skilled agriculturists like the Europeans. You cannot expect a race that has only been adopting our civilisation in this century to equal our farmers who are the products of thousands of years of training. What will happen will be this: Their land that is within the five-mile limit of a road cannot be improved by them, and the result will be that they will have to pay practically double rates under the Bill, because their land will not be improved, and European improvements will be exempt from taxation. That is how it affects the Natives. Well, then, it is said that this Bill is only the complement of the taxing Bill of

the Government last session—exempting improvements. There is no argument in that, and I will show why. Under the Bill of last session, though improvements were exempted, it was well known that personal property had to bear its share of taxation; there was taxation upon personal property by the income-tax, and personal property pays taxation also by way of the Customs revenue. It is not as if you were saying on behalf of the General Government that the land without improvements shall be the sole system of taxation; then you might say you have the right to extend that to local taxation as well; but that is not the principle we have adopted in taxation, and therefore that argument is of no avail whatever. But I would point out another thing, and it is that this is going right in the face of what the Liberals have been fighting for in England. They have been fighting in England to get the large mansions of the nobility taxed. If honourable members keep themselves abreast of what is happening in English Liberal circles at the present moment they will see that the view in England has been that the large mansions and the large castles of the nobility shall be taxed.

9.30. They have no right to be freed from taxation, and the argument is that they ought to be taxed on the actual value, and not merely on the letting-value. What is it this Bill seeks to do? It is going dead in the face of all that the Liberals in England have been struggling for. If you take the case of a man here with a house that has cost from £30,000 to £40,000, that house is going to be entirely exempt from taxation. He is only to pay on the value of the land; his improvements are not to be taxed at all. I say that is going dead in the face of the principles of taxation. Let us look at the question from another point of view. Let us take it from the charitable-aid point of view. How is it that the charitable-aid rates are to be paid? They are to be paid in the future on the unimproved value of the land—they are not to be paid on improvements. The large banks, the mercantile offices, the insurance offices, and the warehousemen's places are all to be free from taxation; you are to free from the charitable-aid rates, which are equivalent to the poor-rates in England, not less than forty-six millions' worth of property, which will not pay one single penny-piece in aid of the poor. Is the House going to do that—to say that it will levy taxation for the relief of the poor only on the unimproved value of the land, and that it will exempt forty-six million pounds' worth of property from any contribution to the aid of the poor? The agitation at Home is in quite a different direction. The agitation amongst the Liberals at Home proceeds on the line that it is unfair that people who have enormous wealth, who, perhaps, own no landed property, and have a million or so of wealth saved, should not be called upon to pay poor rates. Yet, while the Liberals in England consider it is unfair that those who possess enormous wealth, made in the country, should not be called upon to pay towards the

relief of the poor of that country, this Bill is going on entirely opposite lines. Instead of levying charitable-aid rates upon these people, we are going to relieve from this taxation those who have amassed wealth, because they do not happen to own land, and they will not pay anything at all. For example, suppose a man has got deposits in banks: he may have £100,000 on deposit in banks in New Zealand; he is not to pay one single penny-piece in local taxation, or towards the charitable-aid rate.

Mr. J. McKENZIE.—He is not doing that now.

Sir R. STOUT.—The honourable gentleman says he is not doing it now.

Mr. J. McKENZIE.—Not under the Rating Act.

Sir R. STOUT.—In one sense he may be. He may occupy a house which cost £10,000 or £12,000.

An Hon. MEMBER.—He may not be a land-owner.

Sir R. STOUT.—He may have the land only on lease. He may not be the landowner; and what will happen? He is going, on the whole of that valuable property, to be entirely exempt from taxation. I do not think that is fair; I do not think that is right. But what I object to is this: You are lessening the area of your taxation, and are preventing yourselves from getting any remedy for this lessening of the area of your taxation when pressure comes. Now, the time may come, if your products do not increase in the coming years—next year, perhaps—you will find yourself in a difficulty. If your wool does not rise in price, if your gold-production does not increase, you will find the finances of the country in a very straitened position; and, by exempting improvements as you are doing, what form is your taxation to take? Is it to be an increase in the Customs duties? I do not think we can stand that. How, then, will it be done? I can understand the honourable member for Inangahua's position. I honour him for his views. His view is this: that there ought not to be any taxation of any kind levied except upon land. He says that land is the sole source of wealth, and he cites what political economists say upon the question. Now, I do not understand that any economist says anything of the sort; at any rate, I have read nothing of the sort, and I have read a good deal on the subject. Wealth, no doubt, comes from the land, but land of itself will not give value. You need capital, labour, land, and ability to produce wealth, and without all these you will not succeed. It is not right to say that one thing is the source of all. But I do object when he says that land is the one source of wealth, and that land ought to bear all taxation. There may be much to be said in favour of it; I do not deny it; but I know that there is just as much to be said against it. Does the House mean to say that the country has given its voice for the single-tax? This single-tax applies to local rating, and if you apply it to local rating you cannot stop there. The honourable member for Inangahua is logical. According to

Sir R. Stout

him, you must apply the single-tax all round, and do away with all other taxation. You are not to be allowed to have an income-tax; you are not to be allowed to have any Custom-houses. That is the principle; and I ask honourable members representing country districts, are you prepared to affirm this principle? We are to have the single-tax; we are to have no income-tax and only a land-tax. That would mean the crushing of the farmers out of existence, and therefore I am opposed to it. The other point I wish to put is this: I object to the Bill on a further ground. This is asking us to reform our system of local government piecemeal. It is not so necessary as other things that are needed. We do not need any alteration of the Rating Act. That we need some far better system of local government than we have now I admit. We have, perhaps, too many local bodies, the functions of the one overlapping the functions of the other. We need also to have our Charitable-aid Act improved in some respects, and the Government would be doing far better work in spending their time in getting alterations made in our system of local government than in dealing with the rating system. I do not think that necessary, and therefore I will not support the second reading of this Bill.

Mr. J. McKENZIE.—During the whole career that I have had in this House I never have heard a more laboured and sophistical speech than the one to which we have just listened. I should like to know whether the honourable gentleman has any fixed opinions. We cannot find the honourable gentleman for two years pursuing any one line of policy so far as rating or taxation in this colony is concerned, and, if we are to believe the speech which the honourable gentleman has delivered to us this evening we can only come to this conclusion: that he has not been in accord with what the Liberal party in this country have done during the last three years in the way of taxation. Now, why does he think the land-tax is so bad?

Sir R. STOUT.—I opposed the exemption of improvements last year.

Mr. J. McKENZIE.—I say that we can only come to the conclusion that the honourable gentleman has not been in accord with what the Liberal party has done during the last three years in changing our system of taxation from the property-tax to the land- and income-tax. Now, we have heard from the honourable gentleman to-night of the great value to the towns of the vacant spaces in the towns, and what good they do for the health of the people. Will the honourable gentleman for one moment try to prove to this House that the owners of these vacant spaces in the towns have left them vacant for the purpose of finding pure air for the people of the towns? Why do they leave these spaces vacant? It is for this very reason: To keep them purely for speculative purposes, and until such time as other people will make streets and do all those other things which in towns tend to raise the value of property. When the value has been raised sufficiently high to enable the owners to

make a good profit on sale you may be sure they will hold them no longer for the health and recreation of the people. That is about the lamest argument I have ever heard from the honourable gentleman in this House, and every one knows, of course, that he can argue on both sides of a question. We know perfectly well that these people who own these vacant spaces will not maintain them one day longer than they can make money out of them. I agree with the honourable gentleman that in every town there ought to be large vacant spaces; but, then, they should not be the property of these private speculators, but the property of the people themselves, and should be maintained for their benefit, and not rated under any system. Now let us come to the question of doing away with the rating of improvements. The honourable gentleman has instanced to-night the banks, the public offices, the large mercantile houses in a city like Wellington; and he has endeavoured to make the House believe that if these large owners get the valuation for the improvements taken off the property they will be rated merely at the same rate as the small owners. Now, let us take a property on Lambton Quay—say, an acre of land down there. Will the honourable gentleman say that an acre of land on the Tinakori Road is of equal value with the acre on Lambton Quay?

Sir R. STOUT.—I have never said anything so silly.

Mr. J. McKENZIE.—The honourable gentleman was trying to prove that in another way. He was trying to lead the House to believe that the small owner was to pay the same taxation as at present, while at the same time the large owner was to be allowed to escape. Was that not what the honourable gentleman tried to make out? But the value will be exactly the same as it is at the present time *minus* the buildings and improvements, and, if the large owner is to be rated entirely on the value of the land *minus* the improvements, then the large owners of valuable sites in any part of a town will have to pay in accordance with the value of that land.

Mr. BELL.—That is so already.

Mr. J. McKENZIE.—Yes, it is so already; and so it is with the small owner. Each pays exactly the same as at the present time. But, Sir, when the honourable gentleman was dealing with this rating he did not tell us that, and that makes the case different altogether. These people will pay in exactly the same proportion as they do at the present time, because the man who has a quarter-acre of land worth £10,000 on Lambton Quay has a piece of land just so valuable because it is suitable for a particular class of building, and he will pay accordingly; and the man who has an allotment in Tinakori Road worth £100, with a cottage upon it, will be rated at £100; so that the rate will be exactly the same, and we shall, in the meantime, get hold of the man who does not do anything at all with his land. Now let us come to the country districts. I am not going to take up the time

of the House in dealing with this matter, because the honourable gentleman's arguments were so thin that I am sure every honourable member must see through them. Let us, however, take the country districts, and let us take 10,000 acres of land on one side of the road and 10,000 acres on the other side of the road, both properties being of equal value. The property on one side of the road is occupied by a lot of small owners, each of them having a cottage on his section, and a farm-steading, and all these improvements are valued on these 10,000 acres, and all these small owners have to pay on the valuation; while on the property on the other side of the road there is only one mansion and one homestead, and no other buildings at all. Who will have most to pay in that case? Is it the small owner, or is it the large owner? The large owner will, of course, have to pay more. Then, let us take an instance from many cases in the country districts where there are no improvements at all made on the land, and where the land is held in the very same way as I have mentioned that these vacant places are held in the towns—for speculative purposes. There may be sheep placed on it for a time, but there is no money spent on the land, and it is simply held for speculative purposes. Under this Bill that land will have to pay its fair share of the taxation that is necessary to carry on the progress of that district, whereas at the present time the people who make improvements have to find the taxation that is required for improving the country districts further, and thus add to the value of that vacant land. Then, Sir, the honourable gentleman came to the question of poor land, and he went on to show this House how dire the effects would be to the owner of poor land under this Bill. Now, it is quite the reverse. The poor land, in many cases, would require the same class of fencing and buildings that rich land would require; it would have to be fenced in the very same way; and most of the improvements at the present time upon properties in the country districts consist of fencing, plantations, buildings, and so forth; and on poor land there is required the same class of buildings as on better land. Under this Bill, once the land is valued the poor land will have less to pay than at the present time. So the case is quite the reverse from what the honourable gentleman tried to make out.

Sir R. STOUT.—Poor land cannot be improved.

Mr. J. McKENZIE.—“Poor land cannot be improved!” Well, that just shows how much the honourable gentleman knows about land. He may be very conversant with theory, but when it comes to practice he knows very little. In the case of good land, the fact of it being fertile and good land is equivalent to saying that it does not require so much improvement as poor land; that is to say, in the case of fairly rich, good soil, it can yield crops without any of the improvements that are required in many cases on the poor land. So, I say, the position is quite the reverse from

that which the honourable gentleman put to the House. Then, the honourable gentleman went on to say that this Bill is a mistake because it is bringing in a reform of our local government in a piecemeal way. Well, Sir, the Government should not attempt too much in one session; and I think it would be very desirable—and I think, in saying that, the House will agree with me—that a trial should be given of this system of rating. This system of rating has been demanded by a very large section of people in the country, and nothing has made it more popular than the fact that the land-tax which has been initiated by the present Government, and approved of by the Liberal party for the last three years, has operated to the relief of the small owners of land throughout the country. Many people at the present time say, "Well, you have gone a certain length so far as general taxation is concerned, but you have left the burden of local taxation upon us as before, and we want reform." That is the reason why this Bill is brought down, and there will be nothing easier, when we meet again, and the Government is prepared to bring in a local-government Bill—there will be nothing easier than to incorporate this proposal with the system of general reform which the Government hope to introduce next year. I do not think I will take up the time of the House any longer; but, after the speech of the senior member for Wellington City, I thought it necessary to get up and say a few words to show the fallacy of the arguments he used in connection with this measure.

Sir R. STOUT.—I wish to make a personal explanation. The honourable gentleman said I had assumed that the price of land in Lambton Quay would be the same as on Tinakori Road. I said nothing of the sort. What I said was this: that at Lambton Quay the ratio between the value of the land and of the buildings would be about a fourth, perhaps a fifth—that is, if the value of the land was £10,000, it might be £50,000 with buildings on it—and in the other case the ratio of the value of land to the buildings on it would only be about half each.

Mr. McGOWAN.—I think the gentlemen who preceded me in this question commenced with the statement that they had heard no arguments in favour of this Bill, and some also said that they had heard no arguments against the Bill, and they were prepared to submit arguments that would certainly convince the House. I must say I do not presume to be able to introduce any arguments that will convince the House. But there are one or two points that I should like to refer to. I think that in some cases the inferences drawn by some honourable gentlemen were pressed too far, and in other cases not far enough. There seems to be a general feeling, as was distinctly pointed out by the honourable member for Inangahua, that land is the source of all wealth. That honourable member cannot have read any of those arctic tales in which it is shown that the source of wealth is the sea,

Mr. J. McKensie

and that it may be in the form of a dog or the bow and arrow of the Esquimaux or people who live there. It is a mistake to carry this measure into minutiae, because we shall carry ourselves into difficulties, as is done with regard to the single-tax question. The argument that makes me support this Bill is one which is after the senior member for Wellington City's own heart—trust in the people; it is made optional with the people. That is the principle that makes me support this Bill; and I would here say that, generally speaking, the majority of the counties will adopt this Bill, but the majority of the boroughs will reject the Bill. I think that may at once be accepted as a fact, and, if we ask ourselves the reason why, we shall have very little difficulty in coming to that conclusion. Where the honourable member for Wellington City (Sir R. Stout) endeavoured to prove too much was where he said that these large properties would get off at half rates and the smaller properties would have to pay double rates.

An Hon. MEMBER.—Oh! no; he never said that.

Mr. McGOWAN.—The honourable gentleman hopes he never said so. He said these small properties would have to pay double rates in order to make up the deficiency.

Sir R. STOUT.—I said the large properties in Wellington City which now pay £187 would pay £83 under this Bill, and a small property in the outskirts would have to pay exactly the same rates as now. The rate would be doubled, but the amount they would have to pay would be the same.

Mr. McGOWAN.—And you said the large properties would get off by paying half.

Sir R. STOUT.—Yes.

Mr. McGOWAN.—Then, if there is no increased rate to the small holder, there cannot possibly be any injustice. Now, if a large property at present gets off under this Bill with paying half the rates, either the owner of that property is paying too much now, or we do the rest of the public an injustice if we let him off with half the rates. But I say he is not let off with half the rates. He is let off with half on the present rateable value of his property; he is rated for the improvements by water and gas rates, the improvements being taken off in the general rate—in that respect he will get off; but we must not forget that the land is now valued at its intrinsic value for the purpose to which it is applied. The Minister of Lands said that instead of property being taken as a whole it will be taken for what it is used for. We can imagine a front street and a back street. The land in the back street may not be worth more than £1 a foot, whilst the land in the front street may be worth £20 a foot. There are cases where people buy land in the towns and boroughs and hold it in order that the owners surrounding them may improve their properties, and so increase the value of the lands held by themselves. Then these people begin to reap the value of their speculation. But under this mode of taxation these persons will be pre-

vented from holding land for speculative purposes, and land will be only taken up for the purpose of being occupied, and beneficially occupied. It will not pay speculators to buy land and hold it on these terms; and upon this principle the Bill is a good one. The honourable member for Wellington City also referred to the great loss in taxation. If there is a change in taxation, and there is still the same amount of taxation, there can be no loss.

Sir R. STOUT.—The area of taxation is limited.

Mr. McGOWAN.—Was there not a cry throughout the country when it was proposed to adopt the land- and income-tax for the property-tax? Most people admitted that was a dangerous principle to introduce. By-and-by the people became conversant with the justice of the thing, and in a short time it was introduced, and the property-tax abolished; and the same thing will take place in reference to this mode of taxation. There was another point not mentioned in connection with town properties—that, while they get off in respect to general rates, they will still have to pay their full value for gas, water, and so on. Therefore these properties do not get off clear. The theory advanced by the honourable member for Inangahua is not a sound one. It must be borne in mind that the use made of the roads must be taken into consideration. In the case of a large factory, for instance, there may be a great amount of traffic backwards and forwards to it; and is it fair that this particular individual should get clear of his ordinary share of taxation? I say it is not fair, and I think the honourable member for Wellington City will agree with me in that. The honourable member for Wellington City tried to make a point by referring to the castles and mansions in the Old Country. We know these structures have been free of rates, and that the people have been agitating in the direction of compelling their being taxed. I do not think that was a good illustration to introduce in the discussion of this Bill, because by-and-by, when we come to adopt the principle of the honourable member for Inangahua, it will be the land only that will be taxed according to its unimproved value. With reference to the banks, the honourable member for Wellington City made apparently a strong point, and at first there appeared to be something in the contention; but there is not, and for this reason: What are you doing with these cheap-money schemes? They cannot get the same amount of interest, and, after all, these things are bound to equalise themselves in time. Honourable members may laugh, but this theory is working the thing to its proper issue. Money is about to be cheaper; and, if you put this special taxation upon any particular class of property, it is bound to come upon the workers, and, if the honourable gentleman's theory is sound, it does not matter upon what particular kind of property you put the taxation, because it is bound to work out in the same way. I think the principle contained in this Bill, which leaves the power to local bodies interested to

adopt or reject it, is a fair one, and upon that ground only I am prepared to support the Bill.

Mr. O'REGAN.—I desire to make a personal explanation. The honourable member for Thames evidently thought he scored a point against me in my contention about land. I did say the land was the source of all wealth, and I say so again; but the honourable gentleman misinterprets the sense in which I used it. The word "land" includes the material universe, the land and water as well. I think the honourable gentleman will agree with me in saying that it would be impossible to catch fish without boats and other things which must be got from the land.

10.0. Mr. MACKINTOSH.—Arguments have been used to-night against this measure such as I have never heard before. It has been said that he who purchases a section of land, and does not build a house on it or improve it, is not to pay rates, while his neighbour who improves his land has to do so. County Councils, in rating land, do rate improvements. They have rated unimproved land, but at a much lower rate. As soon as ever a man cultivates a farm, fences it, and builds a house upon it, and turns it to good account, he has been immediately punished for making those improvements, by being rated to the full extent of the increased value. If anything is justifiable in this world it is that a man should not have to pay rates on his improvements. In a city, for instance, a man builds a magnificent store. Does he do that city good or not? Does he not improve the value of the adjoining sections immensely? I am not quite prepared to say that in municipalities and boroughs the law should be adopted—it is right that it should be optional there; but in country districts, in land within counties, most decidedly the law should not be optional—it should be imperative, and I trust this House will make it so, in the same manner as they have done under the land-tax. The most astounding argument of all was advanced by the senior member for Wellington City—that land should be left unimproved for health purposes. That is a most absurd and extraordinary statement. Certainly there should be public gardens and public domains, and so on, for recreation purposes. But to say that sections such as those purchased for speculative purposes are to be allowed to remain unimproved upon, in order that we may have health, is an extraordinary statement to make. He who buys a section and erects a splendid building upon it, worth £10,000 or £20,000—is he to be taxed for that? Is he to be punished immediately? Certainly he should not be so treated. As an instance of the injustice of allowing unimproved sections to be rated at only a nominal rate while the owners of improved sections are heavily rated, I will take the Town of Invercargill. I have seen the gas-mains laid through that town, and passing through unimproved sections, which were paying very little indeed to the revenue of the town. The people who built upon the sections paid for that improvement. Then water

was laid through the town, the mains passing through these unimproved sections, which contributed very little indeed towards the cost. I say the Bill is perfectly sound in every respect, and, being optional in the towns, I do trust the House will pass it; but, as regards country districts, I think the Bill should be compulsory.

Mr. FRASER.—The honourable member for Wellington City (Sir R. Stout) dealt with the manner in which this Bill would affect cities, in my opinion, so exhaustively and so conclusively that it is not necessary for me to refer to that part of the subject. However, in dealing with the manner in which it will affect country lands, he omitted reference to one or two points to which I desire to draw the attention of the House. The Bill and the arguments of those who support it are based on a fallacy, and that fallacy is that all land is capable of being improved in the ordinary sense of the term. That is not the case. There are millions of acres of land in this colony which you cannot cultivate; also large areas which if you attempt to plough, or improve in any other manner than by fencing or surface-sowing with grass seed, you will simply destroy. That is a fact which is well known to those who have lived in different parts of the colony. This Bill is intended to remedy what is considered by many to be an improper state of affairs—namely, that land which has within it the potentiality of great improvement, but still remains in its natural state, is being enhanced in value by the construction of roads the cost of which is borne chiefly by improved properties. In order, however, to remedy this, these proposals will inflict serious injustice on those who should not be penalised. There are three or four classes of landholders who will be affected injuriously. First, there are those who hold leases of pastoral land from the Crown—runholders; second, those who hold small grazing-runs; third, those who hold land of inferior quality; fourth, those who hold mining properties. I will take the first of these—that is, the runs. The pastoral tenants hold country in most cases because the land is not susceptible of improvement. But, even if it were susceptible of improvement, are honourable members aware of this fact: that the law prohibits them from improving the land? They may not plough it, or use it at all for any agricultural purpose. I repeat, in the majority of instances the land is not capable of improvement, and, if it is capable, the occupiers are not allowed to improve it. Yet they are to be penalised. There is no doubt that the local bodies will still require the same revenue as before, and, as the rateable value is to be lessened by the amount of the improvements, the rate must be increased. It stands to reason that any man who holds property which cannot be improved, or which he may not improve, will have to pay an increased amount of rates, as he will get no advantage from this Bill. Then, as to the small grazing-runs. They consist chiefly of country which is not capable of improvement other than fencing,

except, perhaps, a little surface-sowing. If it were otherwise the land would not be held in that way. The occupiers of these grazing-runs will suffer severely under this Bill. Then, as regards those who hold inferior land. How it may be in the North Island I do not know, but, as to the South Island, in the Province of Canterbury and also in the Province of Otago there are large areas of light gravelly land covered with tussock which you cannot cultivate to advantage. I do not say it is physically impossible to do so, but you must not plough it, because the land is valuable with the natural tussock upon it, whereas to attempt to crop it or lay it down in grass would only result in failure. There are large areas of such land. The value of the improvements of these lands may possibly be one-fourth of the total amount: in that case they are to be relieved to the extent of one-fourth, and they are to be taxed perhaps double—a very curious way of benefiting people. I say it is not fair. In relieving a certain section of the community the honourable gentleman in charge of this Bill is committing an injustice upon innocent people. If you desire to reach those at whom this Bill is really aimed you should deal with them specifically. Now as to mining property. That is exactly in the same category as small grazing and pastoral runs, because it will derive no advantage under this Bill. The local body must impose an increased rate, and so the miners will have to pay the piper. The interpretation clause defines what the word "improvement" means, but none of those things will be found upon a mining claim or water-race. Take the case of a man holding a lease of mining property—say, an alluvial claim: what improvements are there there? At present he pays on the value of the claim.

An Hon. MEMBER.—He will pay no more now.

Mr. FRASER.—He will pay perhaps double, because the rates may have to be doubled. The rates must be increased, and unless some special provision is made to meet the cases I have referred to serious injustice will be inflicted.

An Hon. MEMBER.—What about the big runs?

Mr. FRASER.—I have already explained their position. I think I have shown clearly that there are four classes of property-holders whom this Bill is going to injure in the desire to force one class to either improve their holding or pay increased rates. I say this is a very curious kind of legislation to adopt, and one, as far as I am concerned, that I certainly cannot approve of. I hope the Colonial Treasurer will recognise the force of my arguments, and accept amendments to meet the cases I have referred to. I have no desire to exempt from increased taxation those at whom the Bill is aimed, but I cannot acquiesce in the wrong that is about to be perpetrated on innocent persons. In regard to many of the remarks that have fallen from some honourable members who have supported this Bill, it would almost appear as though they were animated

Mr. Mackintosh

with the desire of instituting another form of graduated land-tax.

An Hon. MEMBER.—Hear, hear.

Mr. FRASER.—This would be most unfair. Such a principle should not be possible in this Bill. I agree with the senior member for Wellington City that it is the rich who will benefit to a very great extent if this Bill passes. There is no doubt about it. The Minister of Lands said the Bill would do a very great deal towards settling the waste lands; but surely some other more equitable mode can be devised of achieving this result. I disapprove of the Bill as brought down, and I certainly hope that it will receive proper attention when it goes into Committee. I have no doubt, if it is referred to the Statutes Revision Committee before it becomes law, the points to which I have referred will receive due attention.

Mr. R. MCKENZIE.—The honourable gentleman who has just spoken told us that he thought he had proved most conclusively to this House that we should be exceedingly sorry if this Bill should come into force. I listened very attentively to the honourable gentleman, and I never heard him prove anything at all: in fact, I never heard him advance one argument against the proposals of the Bill. He thought that it would be a very great hardship on the goldfields; but I can assure him that it would not have the slightest effect upon the goldfields. It might have a slight effect upon the people who hold leases, but not upon the improvements. A water-race on a goldfield is an improvement, and therefore it will not be affected. To my mind, the Bill is capable of improvement as it stands at present; but it is a Bill in the right direction. The senior member for Wellington City (Sir R. Stout) is always dunning into our ears, morning, noon, and night, the maxim, "Trust the people." Now, Sir, if there is anything upon which you can trust the people more than any other it is on the question of taxation. When it is proposed to get money out of their pockets they are entitled to choose the manner in which it shall be levied. The honourable member for Inangahua also brought forward the question of the Referendum for the colony: here is a perfect Referendum on an important local matter. Here is the greatest possible opportunity of trusting the people, and I am surprised that those honourable gentlemen who were in favour of the Referendum should oppose this Bill. There has been a similar Bill to this in force in Queensland for four years, and it has answered all purposes remarkably well; and, to my mind, it will be found that this Bill will also answer remarkably well in this colony. The senior member for Wellington City also told us that reserves should be kept in all the large cities for breathing-places. I think all over the colony liberal conservation has been made in this respect, and that care has been taken to provide breathing-places in the cities for this purpose. We have reserves of all kinds—public parks, domains, botanical gardens, and recreation-grounds, and also streets of sufficient width. In the latter re-

spect perhaps the city we are in at present is an exception, as it is so situated that the land cannot be spared. With this exception I am sure we have plenty of breathing-places everywhere. Then, the honourable gentleman told us that the banks and large commercial buildings would get relief from taxation, and also that the people living in the suburbs would have to pay more taxation. That argument cannot be maintained, because, as a matter of fact, we know very well land in Willis Street is worth £60 a foot frontage, while at Newtown ground can be obtained for about £1 10s. or £1 a foot; so that at the present time these sections are rated to some extent according to their value. In all our towns now there are vacant areas held by land-monopolists, and these persons will have to pay a portion of the taxation under this Bill; and they ought to pay a little, because they have held this land for years until the value has gone up by the expenditure on the improved sections, and the making of streets, and the other public improvements that are required, which all tend to raise the value; therefore why they should not be compelled to pay a proper share of that public expenditure is almost a mystery to me. I am very glad to say that this Bill will cause them to pay a fair and equal share, the same as the rest of the people. I also think that our whole system of rating needs improving, and I have no doubt that this Bill is an improvement. It may be the means of causing a few extra buildings to be erected; but I do not think that it will have any material influence in that direction, because people who hold their sections for speculative purposes, or hold them with a view to a rise in price, will not build unless they find it profitable to do so. The honourable member for Clutha told the House that whenever the honourable member for Inangahua mentioned land he got off his head. I think the honourable member for Clutha was a little off his head to-night when he said that this Bill, if brought into force, would simply ruin the farmers. In my opinion it will be the means of doing a great deal of good to the farmers, because most of the large landowners will have to pay something towards making roads and tracks through the waste lands of the colony under this measure, and that is a very desirable thing for the small settlers. My only objection to this Bill is that it is not made compulsory. I think a Bill of this kind ought to be made compulsory. I think the Government should insist on this system of taxation being brought into force. When the Bill gets into Committee I shall probably make an effort to get that clause altered. The whole system of rating, I think, needs improvement, and I hope that the Government will see their way clear to do away with that clause altogether, and make this system compulsory, and then we shall have a proper system of rating all over the colony.

11.0. Mr. HALL.—Sir, it is not my intention to detain the House many minutes, and the few remarks I have to make will apply to one or two arguments adduced

by honourable members this evening. The honourable member for Wakatipu said that if you take away the value of improvements you would soon have to double the rates upon the improved value to raise the amount required for carrying on local government. So far the honourable gentleman's remark is quite correct—that you would have to double the rate in order to raise the amount required. But he forgot to tell us this: that by levying rates on the unimproved value you will receive a more proportionate share from those who have large areas of unimproved land. That is the very object of this Bill. The object of this Bill is to take from those who allow land to remain uncultivated and unimproved a larger proportion of the rates than is received from them under the present system. I do not think there can be very much injustice in this Bill in its present form, especially in its application to country districts. Take, for instance, a district having 500 ratepayers on the roll; 370 of these have single votes, 130 have an average of three votes each; these 130 could always dominate the 370 ratepayers. Could there be anything unfair in that? In these times, when we are saying that one man should have one vote, that the majority should rule, and that you should trust the people, yet you are afraid to leave this matter in the hands of the ratepayers, although those who have improved lands in larger areas have plural votes. Under these circumstances, I think we should be prepared to admit that all sections of ratepayers are receiving justice. The senior member for Wellington City said that in England taxation was going in the direction of taxing the palatial mansions of the rich. The honourable gentleman is right. But I must say that it would be very much more in the interests of England if it went in the direction of taxing the land. Take an estate—and there are many such estates—say, of twenty thousand acres, worth £40 an acre—£800,000; yet he talks of taxing palatial buildings—possibly worth £20,000. This would be taxing the shadow and forgetting the substance.

Sir R. STOUT.—They tax the land in England.

Mr. HALL.—Not to the extent they should. I maintain that we should tax the source of the large incomes, not the residence in which the owner lives. It is illogical to say that you should tax the house in which a man lives, and forget that he is every year receiving a princely revenue from the areas of land that surround him, which is a never-failing source. Honourable members know quite well—it has been stated many times—that there are thousands of people waiting for the unearned increment; they employ their money in buying sections of land and waiting for the time when they can pocket the profit and walk away. I have in my mind's eye, in my own electorate, an instance where two men bought three thousand acres of land some twelve years ago. They absented themselves from the country, and there the land remained. On the opposite side of the road there are fifty or sixty small settlers

living on a similar area to that these two men bought. These people made roads, and paid three times the amount of taxation; and at the present the two buyers are prepared to walk in and pocket the unearned increment. Will the honourable gentleman say that is fair? This taxation will be an incentive to people to improve; if they find they cannot pay the taxation on the unimproved value they will set to work and improve the land, and if they have not sufficient capital they will sell part of their land, which will be better for themselves and for the country. Another important matter in connection with this is the easy method of valuation. When once the unimproved value is obtained it is there, and the taxation will remain upon it without material alteration. It will be very little trouble for the valuer to fix the amount of value upon the land. I hope the Bill will be carried. I am not prepared to say that it will be applicable to our large towns. I agree with the honourable member to some extent that there are many vacant sections in the large towns heavily mortgaged, and to put an increased rate on them would be to ruin the owner; but what we want to do is to provide some system whereby we shall diminish the desire to acquire these town lands for speculation. In the meantime, I think, as the large towns have the greatest amount of voting-power, and the improved properties have the greatest voting-power, it may be left safely in their hands.

Mr. MASSEY.—It is not necessary for me to refer to what has been said by previous speakers, because, though we have heard a great many assertions, there have been very few arguments in support of the principles of the Bill. I consider if the Bill becomes law it will be very unsettling in its effects, inasmuch as it provides that 10, 15, or 20 per cent. of the ratepayers, as the case may be, in any district may demand that the question of unimproved rating should be submitted to the ratepayers. We all know that in every district there are a certain number of agitators who are dissatisfied with existing arrangements, and are anxious for a change, and we shall be putting it in the power of these people to demand from the local body that another election shall take place. I think we have too many elections already, both general elections and local elections, and elections for other purposes; and then we have reason to know that the local bodies have enough to do with their funds without spending them in experimenting on fads such as this. I listened very carefully to the Treasurer in introducing the Bill, with the object of learning whether it is going to be an improvement on the existing system. That one point he failed to make clear. Honourable members seem to forget that we have in the colony vast areas of land which have no unimproved value whatever. I am sure most country members will bear me out in this: that there are hundreds of thousands of acres not worth anything. What are we going to do in these cases? If there is no unimproved value, what are we going to do for roads? If those people want roads they

Mr. Hall

must rate on the improved value; they must tax improvements or go without roads. Then, there are whole districts which are not worth the amount of money that has been spent on them—take away the value of the improvements and there is nothing left. What are you going to do in this case? You must tax the improvements or the people must go without roads. I think I heard the honourable member for Wairarapa refer to clause 9. He seemed to be under the impression that this clause provided that when any district adopted the principle of unimproved rating the others must follow suit. I believe he is mistaken in this. I must confess I was of the same opinion when I first looked at it. But the clause is very badly drafted. I think it means that when a county adopts the principle of unimproved rating all the local bodies within its boundaries must do the same thing. There is nothing very objectionable in this; but I hope if the Bill passes its second reading the Minister will see this clause is made clear so that we can understand it. Personally I hope the Bill will not pass its second reading, because I can think of numerous instances where the principle will work out very unfairly. Take the case, for instance, of two men buying allotments of equal value in the suburbs, one comparatively rich and the other a poor man: the rich man would probably go in for a villa residence costing £2,000 or £3,000; the poor man would be satisfied with a cottage costing £100 or £150. These are not extreme cases. They are instances which occur every day. I ought to mention, perhaps, that the man with the extensive establishment would probably own carriages and horses, either for his pleasure or for his business, and he would do a good deal more than his share in wearing out the roads. The other man would have no horses, and consequently he would only use the footpath. Now, if the principle of this Bill is carried out, the two men would have to pay exactly the same amount of local rates. I do not think any reasonable-minded man would say that this was fair. In my opinion it would be both unfit and unjust. Or take the case of a village settlement consisting of, perhaps, one hundred half-acre allotments. Say, ninety of those allotments would be occupied by working-people who will have their residences thereon. The other ten sections will be occupied by tradespeople, storekeepers, and other classes of business people. Now, these ten men will do more in the way of using the roads than all the others put together, while every one of the ninety under the principle of this Bill will have just as much to pay as one of the ten. It appears to me that if any class should be exempted from local rates it is that class which does not use the roads, and that is the class whose taxes it is proposed to increase. Or, if we carry the illustration into the country, take the case of a man going on to bush-land or unimproved land: directly he goes on to the land he will have to pay as much in taxes as the man who has been there twenty years, and who has improved his land, and who is able to pay accord-

ingly. In the case of the man going on to new land, he would be taxed heavily at the time he was least able to pay, and be compelled to pay away a certain amount of the capital he required for making his improvements. Instances might be multiplied to show the unfair working-out of this principle, but I think the cases I have mentioned will be sufficient, whether in the city, or in suburbs, or in the country, to show that the effect will be the same—namely, that those who are least able to pay will have their taxes increased, while those who are best able to pay will have them reduced. In arranging the incidence of taxation I think the principle should be this: that every man should contribute to the revenue in proportion to his ability. But we seem inclined to lose sight of this fact, and to put the taxes on the people who are least able to pay, and on those who are least able to make their influence felt at the ballot-box. I cannot support this Bill, because I feel sure that it will make one class pay for benefits which others receive, and will tend to put the taxation on the shoulders of those least able to bear it.

Mr. THOMPSON.—Sir, I do not intend to say much on this Bill. This House has affirmed the principle contained in the Bill, although it was thrown out in another place. I do not, therefore, see that there should be any prolonged discussion upon it. I myself intend to vote for the second reading of the Bill, as I believe it will suit the country settlers whom I represent very well. But, at the same time, I doubt whether it will work out so well in the cities. I do not believe it will suit the large cities. Were I representing a city constituency I think I should be found opposing the Bill. However, as it is, the option of the matter rests entirely with the ratepayers themselves, and I do not think we need waste much time in discussing it. Even in applying it to the country districts there is one class of settlers—as was pointed out by the last speaker—who would suffer under the provisions of this Bill—that is, the new bush settlers. They would immediately become liable to any local rates, without the benefit of any roads whatever. So that I am somewhat doubtful as to how the measure will work out. Where the settlers have been for a number of years on their farms, and where those farms have been reproductive, the Bill will work very well: at the same time, I am not very clear in my mind that it is going to give the settlers all the advantages they expect. However, as the Bill is optional with the ratepayers themselves, I have no doubt they will take care not to bring it into operation unless they think it will suit them. There is another weak point in the Bill which I should like to point out to the House—that is, that it means another local election; and, if there is anything this House should guard against, it is this continually increasing the local elections and the working-expenses of the local bodies. If we go on increasing the functions of the local bodies in this manner, by holding local elections on matters of this kind, in a very few years all the

rates will be absorbed by election-expenses. I think myself it would have been better if the Government, instead of bringing in this Bill, had gone into the whole question of local government. The Government, for some reason or other, are continually shelving this question of local government. It would have been far better, I think, for the Government to have brought in one large measure dealing with the whole question, instead of bringing in legislation piecemeal in this fashion. We should endeavour to sweep away a large portion of our existing local bodies. At the present time we have nothing but local elections on all sorts of matters, and to such an extent that our rates are being swallowed up by that means. If there is a division on the Bill I shall vote for the second reading, because I think it will very well suit the district I represent, and I believe if the Bill passes my constituents will adopt it. I would much rather, however, hear the House say, "We will have no more tinkering with the question"; because by encouraging the Government to bring in these measures we are only enabling them to put off the time for dealing with the general question of local government.

Mr. CROWTHER.—Sir, as I happen to be one of the unfortunate people interested in this measure, I shall have a few words to say on the question, though I do not intend to detain the House very long. I can indorse the remarks of the last speaker. We have been continually delving into matters and leaving them in an unfinished state, and they will ere long be so complicated that the whole thing will become unworkable, and it will be so difficult to understand the position that we shall have to begin again, and pass a consolidating measure. That is what I fear, and those who have filled offices in connection with our large cities know the responsibility they have to undertake. They had all borrowed large sums of money, and had entered into engagements to pay interest on those sums. When we entered into those engagements we thought then that, at the very worst, we should be able to raise a sufficient amount to pay interest. But if this House is going to bring down every session seven or eight Bills affecting our local legislation, I feel quite sure it will be impossible for those having the management of local affairs to decide how to handle their revenue so as to meet their engagements. The honourable member for Wellington City (Sir R. Stout), when speaking on this question, made an effort to show what great difficulties will arise in connection with this measure, and I fancy that my experience will enable me to see some of the very great difficulties also. We have in our large cities some landowners who leased their lands a long time ago at very low rentals. Those lands are now bringing in very high rentals—not to the owner, but to the lessee, who has put from twenty to thirty thousand pounds' worth of improvements on the quarter-acre sections. Now, if anything should happen at any time to compel the owners of these

quarter-acre sections to pay increased taxation, they will have more to pay in taxes than they are getting in rental. I cannot see how any city men having a fair practical knowledge of affairs in this country, and who are hourly mixed up with intricate business transactions, can make up their minds to try and level us so much as to say that a section of a quarter of an acre with twenty thousand pounds' worth of improvements should be rated according to the same rule as a hundred-acre paddock that is only worth half a crown an acre. I cannot see how this rule can be reduced to practice, if it is to be our object to give fairness to all parties concerned. There is no doubt that these corporations will have to meet their obligations. They have borrowed moneys; but how are they to raise sufficient revenue if they are to be continually interfered with? Why, we shall never know where we are, or what we are doing. We have had this session six or seven Bills more or less interfering with the management of local affairs, and lessening the amount of revenue coming in to local bodies. Such being the case, I cannot see my way to support this Bill. I have no desire to stand in the way of any progressive measures which the Government may bring down having for their object the welfare and prosperity of the people who have, so to speak, helped to make this country, and who have got their responsibilities, which

11.30. they cannot shift. We hear very often about divided responsibility; but gentlemen situated in these large cities, who have invested their all, who have their properties mortgaged, who have to pay interest, cannot shift their responsibilities: and the less the law interferes with them and their ability to meet their responsibilities the better it will be for them and for the country, and for every one concerned. It seems to me, as far as I am able to judge, we are going too far altogether. We have got four Bills—a Rating Bill, an Unclaimed Lands Bill, another Land Bill, and a Native Land Bill—four Bills all bearing on the same subject that is before us now. Well, I was going to say it would be food for a Philadelphia lawyer for some time to come. Certainly, the ordinary understanding, so far as I am able to judge, is not able to master them. I think the Government is going too far altogether in this matter. When local bodies have accepted these responsibilities, and the Government know very well that they must be carried out, I think it should afford them great pleasure to aid and assist local bodies to carry them out to the best of their ability, and to the credit of the colony. Instead of that, the Government seem to desire to keep shunting and transferring the responsibilities from one to another, till we really do not know from one month to another what will come next. Having such a feeling, Sir, it creates a certain amount of unrest, which is anything but favourable to progress. Therefore I say that should not be countenanced. So far as I am concerned, I have been wired to, and have received telegrams containing suggestions time after time

Mr. Thompson

bearing on this question—a question that is continually arising—this interference with local bodies. What object is to be gained by this interference? The Government cannot effect a profit, or in any way add to their exchequer. The measures that are being proposed are going to lessen our income, and they are going to increase our expenditure, and to upset our system of collecting our revenue, so that altogether the state of our taxpayers is one of unrest. Clause 4, I think it is, provides that 10 or 15 per cent. may start a poll. We know well enough that when you start ratepayers talking and voting you start arguments and discussions; you startle the public mind and set agitation on foot, and then it is very hard indeed to say what feelings will be engendered. Sometimes, quite unnecessarily, differences arise, and out of very little matters breaches come that cannot easily be healed. Consequently, it is my strong conviction that it would have been in the interests of the Government, and better for the colony, and, so far as I am able to see at present, very much better for the local bodies, if this Bill had never been introduced.

Mr. LANG.—I intend to support this Bill, for I have seen the evils of absenteeism in many cases. I know men who have bought land for purely speculative purposes, and have waited until the land joining has been improved, and have then reaped the benefit from other people's industry. In many cases the speculative purchasers have not, until they have been compelled, even joined in fencing their boundaries. I may say that the rates in some portion of some of the electorates are really not worth collecting, the present sum being so small. I am speaking of small sections belonging to absentees. I may say I look upon it as wrong to tax industry. I believe the land- and income-tax is vastly superior to the property-tax, and I consider that any one who holds this view must be in favour, if he is logical, of rating on the unimproved value for local purposes. Another reason why I shall support the measure is that it is voluntary. I take it that people should be the best judges on this matter, and if they wish it they should be allowed to adopt this principle. I am ready to believe that in some districts it will not be advisable to adopt it, but I think the people are the best judges as to whether they should bring it in or not. There is one question I should like to ask the Minister in charge of the Bill, and that is the proportion of votes required to bring the Bill into operation. I do not think it is clearly defined. In the Counties Act a three-fifths majority is required, and in the Loans to Local Bodies Act one-half.

Mr. J. W. KELLY.—I should like to say a few words before the Minister replies. The honourable member for Waitemata laid down what he considered to be very clear, that the poorest class of settlers will be the heaviest taxed by the operation of this Bill. Now, I will show what the operation will be, and I think I can show the completely reverse side of the picture. I have in my mind's eye two sections

in Invercargill, unimproved. They paid each 10s. a year, but in one case, where a man spent £350 in buildings, his rates were immediately raised to £4. Now, the carrying-out of this Act would simply equalise the rates these men pay at the present time. I defy any one to say it is not the case that a man is penalised for spending money upon permanent improvements. Under our present system, taxation, so far as local bodies are concerned, is simply robbery by force of law. That is the only thing it can be called. The difference between a highwayman of olden times and local bodies' taxation at the present day is this: The highwayman compelled the unfortunate traveller to deliver his money by placing a pistol at his head, our local bodies rob the improving ratepayers of money by force of law. Sir, I consider the whole of our taxation system from the very earliest days of the colony has been framed specially in the interests of speculators. As far as this Bill goes, I believe it is right in principle, and it will kill effectively land-speculation, either in boroughs, cities, or country districts. Now, Sir, objections have been made that it will not operate in large cities. This I admit is very likely to be the case, but in small boroughs I say it will operate with the very best possible effect; and I can certify from my experience in the Southland District that, both as regards country and the small suburban boroughs surrounding Invercargill, it will prove one of the best measures ever passed into law. In these districts we have a very large amount of land held by speculators. It has been found to be a continual drag upon the welfare of the district that these empty sections should be held by speculators. They have been enhanced in value by the expenditure of borrowed money, and by the expenditure of money upon buildings and other permanent improvements, while these empty sections have in every way retarded the value of improved properties. Consequently I have very great pleasure in supporting the Bill now before us, and I hope it will become law during the present session.

Captain RUSSELL.—I want to say a few words before the Bill passes. It is difficult at this moment to meet exactly what the honourable member said when he introduced the second reading of the Bill. I am told by a voice behind me that he said nothing: at any rate, he did not leave a very lasting impression on my mind. But the question that one naturally asks when a Bill is introduced is, "Why has this Bill been introduced?" Is it in response to any urgent demand on behalf of those most interested? Has it been caused by petitions from local bodies? Has there been any expression of a strong desire on the part of the ratepayers in any district that such an Act should be brought in? And, if not, what has been the reason that has induced the Government to introduce this Bill? There would appear to be a good many reasons why the Bill should not have been introduced, and, as the Minister, so far as my memory serves, gave no special reason why it should be introduced,

one is completely at a loss to understand what has been the object which has caused the Minister, in a Parliament which has already got more Bills before it than it can possibly attempt to even read, much less to understand, to bring in a Bill of this sort. As was mentioned by the honourable member for Auckland City (Mr. Crowther), we have a Rating on Unimproved Value Bill, a Crown Lands Rating Bill, and a Rating Bill. Well, Sir, here are three Bills all more or less at variance with one another.

Mr. CROWTHER.—And an Unclaimed Land Bill.

Captain RUSSELL.—Yes, an Unclaimed Land Bill. There are four measures before us, all more or less differing in their provisions. What can the possible object be for introducing these? There is only one object that I can see, and that is to propitiate the honourable member for Inangahua. This is distinctly a step in the direction of the single-tax. Now, if the country is distinctly in favour of the single-tax, let us have the question brought down fairly and debated upon its merits. Do not let us have it introduced in a Bill like this, a great question of policy brought in in a manner which, I believe, may escape the observation of a great many members of this House. It is a question which, at any rate, has not yet been before the electors of the colony. So far, at any rate, no special reason has been given by honourable members since I came into the House this evening in favour of the Bill. The honourable member for Waipawa and the honourable member for Invercargill have given us one or two instances of what they imagine to be grievances in connection with their own particular electorates. Of course, it is very sad that there should be grievances anywhere; but the New Zealand Parliament, unfortunately, seems to be prepared to run at any moment into the adoption of principles to meet individual cases of grievance. We are invited to pass a law which will affect the local government of the country for years to come to suit an emergency of the present moment. All through, it seems to me, there is too much desire on the part of Parliament to rush into a remedy for what is merely a temporary grievance. One has heard in the course of the evening many arguments about the unimproved value. Well, there is not so much really in this cry about unimproved value as people think; nor is there very much in the cry against absentees, because we have, as everybody knows, put a tax upon absentees, and yet the net result of that tax upon absentees is so infinitesimally small that probably the damage done to the colony by taxing absentees is far greater than the revenue derived from the taxation of those absentees. So that I do not think that in either of those cases there was any necessity for special legislation. Sir, the honourable member for Marsden did not convince me by his argument that he was really in favour of the Bill. I listened to him with a great deal of attention—because, though I have had occasion to differ from him on

Captain Russell

some occasions, on the whole it cannot be denied that he talks very good sense—and the whole gist of his argument was, "I am going to vote for this Bill, although it is a precious bad Bill. It may possibly suit some of my constituents; but as to whether the Bill is intended for the good of the colony I am very far from certain of that, and, in fact, I think it is open to considerable doubt. Yet still I am going to vote for the Bill."

Mr. THOMPSON.—It is optional.

Captain RUSSELL.—Quite so, Sir; and its being optional is one of its greatest defects. Surely one of the most desirable factors in all systems of taxation is to have complete uniformity, unless there is good reason to be shown to the contrary. And yet under this Bill—the 4th clause notwithstanding, which seems to me unintelligible in its drafting—it would appear to me that, taking the neighbourhood of Dunedin, which offers a remarkable example of small local government, you might have the Borough of Caversham, the Borough of Roslyn, the City of Dunedin, and the various other boroughs surrounding that city, each with a different system of rating. Not only that, but from another Bill—if I may be allowed to allude to the Rating of Crown Lands Bill—we shall be in the position, supposing this rating on unimproved values comes into operation, of having the Crown lands specially exempted from its operation. Well, if that is passed—

Mr. WARD.—Are you going to discuss the other Bill now?

Captain RUSSELL.—I do not propose to discuss it; but surely it is difficult to follow up a train of argument unless one is allowed to allude to principles in another measure actually at variance with the Bill before us. There is reason to believe that proposals will be brought down, at any rate, exempting Crown lands from the operation of this Bill. And not only that, but special loans which have been raised for particular purposes are secured on a different system of rating altogether from this system of rating on the unimproved value. But, coming to the unimproved value itself, what, really, does it mean? Honourable members, in speaking, seem to think there is some scientific definition attachable to the expression "unimproved value." The honourable member for Waipawa just now said it was quite an easy method of valuation, that being an important factor. But in what way is it more easy to arrive at the unimproved value than to arrive at the improved value? It seems to me that it is not half so simple. The improved value of a property is ascertainable because there is a market value, and that market value is more or less ascertainable, although, unhappily—and, I believe, mainly owing to the policy of the present Government—nothing has even an improved value now. Landed property of every description, so far from having a market value, is absolutely valueless. Put it in the market, and if you want cash you will find it is absolutely impossible to sell it. That is mainly attributable, I believe, to the policy

of the present Government, which has entirely destroyed the confidence of persons in the value of property, so that it is impossible to sell any property at a price that will show a profit to the seller. How can you arrive, then, at the unimproved value of land? The unimproved value, to unthinking minds, I am afraid, is what is termed in America "the prairie value," and what we are accustomed to term the upset value for cash. But probably everybody who has witnessed the absurd pranks of the so-called Assessors under the Land and Income-Assessment Act will have realised that it is impossible to arrive at anything approaching to the unimproved value. The improvements themselves are never allowed to the person who has made them. One has many instances before one of that kind of thing. The valuers up in the Hawke's Bay Provincial District estimated the cost of putting up an ordinary wire fence in the district at £80; but, however much that fence may have cost to keep it in good order, the fact of its being in position immediately detracted from its value; and yet this fence may be in constant need of repair to be kept in a constant state of efficiency, and notwithstanding that fact the Assessors deducted 25 per cent. from the value of the fence. In the large cities we shall be told that this Bill is applicable, as it may be possible to arrive at the value of improvements there; but in the country it is practically impossible to do so. Honourable members may not have experienced the fact that frequently, in going upon bush-country, you have to spend more in improving the estate than the estate is worth when the improvements are completed. How, then, is that question to be dealt with? Any person who takes the trouble to fell a piece of land covered with bush, and have that bush cleared and stumped, in all probability will find at the end of a certain number of years that the amount of money he has spent on improvements is in excess of the value of that property, if he has to sell it. How will you find out the unimproved value of such land? I shall be told the unimproved value of the land is what it is worth, *minus* the improvements. But, as the improvements themselves represent more than the actual selling value, I do not see how it is possible to define the unimproved value. There is, of course, a definite value to sell at, but that is the improved value, and not the unimproved value. The definition of unimproved value seems to be unscientific altogether. In the country almost all properties that have only an unimproved value produce nothing. It is constantly supposed that the farmer proper does not exist, and the person who lives on the land is spoken of as nothing but a land-speculator. There are, of course, a certain number of people who go into land-speculations,—and, in this connection, I understood, a statement was made by the honourable member for Invercargill—I think it was he, but I am not sure—to the effect that it is common for people to hold land for the speculative value. The unearned increment cannot

exist now, for country land now is subjected to county, Road Board, and other local rates, and, in cities, to municipal rates, as well as the land-tax. The dread of holding landed property is now so strong that during the last few years, though the improvements have been increased considerably, the land has actually diminished in value owing to the heavily-increasing taxation, and the ever-constant threat of confiscation which is uttered in this House; so that the value of land is so steadily on the decrease that it is absurd to suppose that any number of men can hold land for speculative values. In the country it is impossible to dissociate improvements from the value of the land, the two are so inseparably connected; the two have, therefore, to be valued together. In the town, no doubt, it is far more easy to define the value of improvements upon a section, inasmuch as they are standing before you and too patent a fact to be ignored. The unearned increment, therefore, can be more easily ascertained in the towns than in the country. In the case of a person who has suburban property, or is able to erect a building in the town, the valuer can at once see what the improvements represent; but go into the country and the improvements made there are not perceptible, in all probability, when assessing the value. Many instances have come under my notice of improvements in which the expenditure of great quantities of money has been absolutely ignored when the Assessors came to value the land. It is impossible for the valuer to see if the improvement has been exhausted, and therefore he does not allow for it; and, although it may be that but for these improvements the property would not produce anything, the unimproved value upon which taxation is now levied is not the true unimproved value, but is the value brought about by the labour of the farmer. It is brought about, of course, by roads being made through the district; and how are those roads made, in a very large proportion of cases? These roads are made by means of a rate or rates made on the land itself. Part of the value of the land has been taken, actually, and has been expended in making roads which added to the value of the land; and these roads are thus part of the land; and every small extension of road adds more value to the country land. It is improved by the expenditure of the rates levied on the property itself, and therefore the improvements are paid for by the land itself, and are not paid for by the State. Coming to the towns, how are you to fix, in many instances, the unimproved value? Let me take, as an illustration, a large quantity of Government property in this City of Wellington. Take, for instance, the land where the Government Buildings stand, or the land where the Government Printing Office stands, and that where the railway-station stands. What was the unimproved value of that land twenty or thirty years ago? In those days it was not land at all. It might have had an uncertain value as a fishery for the Natives, but, for all practical purposes, for the inhabitants of

the City of Wellington it was non-existent. Nevertheless, at the present time it has what is termed an "unimproved value" of a very considerable sum. And, then, immediately opposite to the Government Printing Office there stands a hotel—I forget the name of the hotel; at any rate, there are a series of shops, and, among others, there is a property called Burrett's Corner. Probably Burrett's Corner and the land on which the Printing Office stands represent the same unimproved value at the present time; but in the one case the unimproved value was created by Nature, in the other case it was brought about by the industry of man: it was simply so much seawater, and yet, for the purposes of valuation at the present time, the unimproved value of the two properties is identically the same. Surely no person would go so far as to say that is scientific. If in the one instance the unimproved value was created entirely by the energy of man—by reclamation of the land from the sea—while the unimproved value of the other was created by Nature, it goes to show that there is no scientific basis for the unimproved value. So, again, you go to the country districts and find similar anomalies. I have in my mind's eye three cases whose situation is relatively the same, and which are similarly placed with reference to the situation of post-and telegraph-offices and railway-communication. We have over on the East Coast land which is approximately—I have not got the actual value now—of the unimproved value of £10 per acre. That land, as I chance to know, was originally swamp-land, which was capable of producing nothing until money had been spent upon it. When we go to the neighbourhood of Palmerston we find there land of similar quality which is assessed at an unimproved value of £5 per acre, or only one-half the value of similar land on the East Coast. There, again, there is no scientific basis for the unimproved value. Although, as I have said, these properties are situated alike in relation to telegraph-offices and railway-stations, and are equally supplied with good roads, and all the conveniences of civilisation, yet the unimproved value of one is £10 per acre, and that of the other £5 per acre. Now, I have in my mind a third illustration in a piece of land through which a railway runs, and which is slightly more distant from a railway-station than either of the other pieces, and this piece of land is now in the same condition the other two pieces of land were in twenty years ago.

12.0. And yet, though it is capable of the same improvement as the other two pieces, the unimproved value of the one is £10, of the second £5; and the third piece, which is a large swamp through which the Manawatu Railway runs, has its unimproved value fixed at 5s. We have, therefore, the unimproved value of three pieces varying from 5s. to £10. Surely no person will say that is fair or logical, or in any way a scientific basis for levying taxation. Some honourable members speaking to-night did not agree, apparently, that this taxation would fall more heavily upon the poor

man than upon the rich man. Unquestionably, any person thinking the subject out must come to the conclusion that it will fall more heavily upon the poor man than upon the rich.

Mr. O'REGAN.—Not at all.

Captain RUSSELL.—That is the honourable gentleman's opinion, and he is entitled to his opinion just as I am to mine. But I would just put a case before the House. Let us suppose that two men go and take up under the present Land Act as large an area of land as that Act allows. We will suppose each takes up two thousand acres of second-class land—the one with capital, the other a struggling settler. We will assume they are on opposite sides of the road, and that they take up land of similar value on the same day. They pay, of course, the same taxation on the unimproved value of the land. The capitalist goes straight away and brings the whole of his land into profitable occupation within three years, and still he pays on the unimproved value exactly the same amount as the poor man on the opposite side of the road. The poor man struggles along, and is unable to get more improved than he is compelled to do under the Act. He is getting no return from his land, but, although he is getting no return from it, he is obliged to pay the same amount of taxation as the capitalist who has the land opposite to him and is deriving a large income. I maintain, therefore, that the man who has capital and goes upon the land and brings it into profitable occupation is a much more fit subject to pay taxation than the struggling settler.

Mr. HALL.—If he is a poor man, what right has he to two thousand acres?

Captain RUSSELL.—The acreage does not matter so far as the argument is concerned. The whole principle of the Government now is to put poor people on the land. We will take it at whatever acreage you like, and the same argument will apply. The practical result is that the wealthy man is taxed no more than the poor man, and relatively less. I have always held that the only true source of taxation is realised wealth. I would tax the man with realised wealth. Whatever the aggregates of the land-tax, income-tax, or any other tax may be, when a man has realised wealth it seems to me that is a fair subject for taxation. There is another reason why this taxation upon the unimproved value will operate unfairly, and that is, a man who has rich land, and who is able to bring it into a high state of cultivation, will be taxed less than the man who has poor land not cultivated. For this reason: It probably takes more money to plough a piece of rough, upland country than it takes to plough a rich piece of land down below; it takes less to fence a rich piece of land than it does to fence an area of poor land; with the result that, whatever money has been expended in the improvements, the net return upon the poor land is infinitely less than the net return from the improvements on the rich piece of land; and therefore it appears to me that, as the rich land

Captain Russell

gravitates into the hands of the richer men, you are letting off two classes which decidedly ought not to be let off. You let off the rich tradesman and the rich professional man who builds a handsome house in the suburbs of a town, and the rich farmer in a good situation. The whole principle of this Bill seems to me to be, first, to destroy what ought to be most desired—that is, uniformity of taxation; second, it runs at variance with existing Acts; third, it runs at variance with the existing system of rating; and fourth, it will benefit to an extent I think it should not the rich city men who build fine mansions, and the rich professional man who builds a fine house for himself in the suburbs of a town; and it seems to me the struggling settler will have to pay more than he ought to pay, whilst the owner of rich land will be placed in a much more favourable position than the occupant of poor land. For these reasons I consider it is a Bill which ought not to be passed into law.

Mr. STEVENS.—I should like to make a few remarks on this subject, because it seems to me the honourable gentleman who has just sat down has proved most conclusively that this Bill will be a great advantage to the poorer settlers and a great disadvantage to more wealthy people. There has been so much said on this subject that it is not my intention to occupy the House more than a few minutes; but I will give a case in point, and then ask the honourable gentleman whether his arguments can hold water as against the fact I am about to state. In my locality there was a large number of sections of land, or a considerable number at any rate, containing forty acres each. One of these sections became the property of a large property-owner; another of the sections was cut up into four portions, and a house built upon each of the ten acres. They were highly improved, but they were a greater distance from the town than the forty-acre section, which was merely fenced round and grassed, and still remains the property of the great owner. When the taxation was levied for local purposes each of the ten-acre allotments was, by reason of the improvements effected, valued at £16 per acre, while the forty-acre section, only partially improved, was valued at £6 per acre. Therefore each of these ten-acre sections of land, being exactly of the same quality, paid taxation upon the improvements effected upon them to the extent of £16 per acre, and the forty-acre section of land paid £6 per acre. Now, there is a living example of whether this Bill will benefit the great owner or whether it will benefit the poorer classes. I say that this is one of the best instances I could give. The honourable gentleman gave as an illustration a swamp belonging to the Manawatu Railway Company as being similar land to that in Hawke's Bay, and in a similar position. He also instanced land at Palmerston North as being in the same position. If any two things are dissimilar they are the Makererua Swamp and the swamps which are in Hawke's Bay. The latter are drainable. It is doubtful whether this swamp

is drainable, and, if drainable, a very large number of years must elapse before they can effect the drainage, and therefore it would be impossible at the present juncture for any person to say that it has an actual and permanent future value.

Captain RUSSELL.—It can be improved.

Mr. STEVENS.—It can be improved, I acknowledge, but the actual cost of improving it has not been ascertained. But the cost of improving the swamp in Hawke's Bay is easily ascertained, and, as to the doubt of being able to ascertain the value of the land, why it is as simple as possible to any one who understands what land is. There appears to be an impression that the unimproved value of land is only arrived at by some haphazard method. My view of the case is that if you wish to ascertain the unimproved value of land you must first picture to yourself what that land would be if there was not a stick of building upon it, or fencing, or grass, or anything the hand of man had done to improve it; and then, if this land were offered for sale under reasonable conditions, what it would bring in the market. That is the first step. Then you ascertain—which is easily done—the value of the improvements; add the two together, and take the unimproved value from the value of the improvements, or *vice versa*. That gives you the unimproved value of the land. And, as to saying that poor land will be taxed in greater proportion than rich land, it is a positive absurdity. For example, let us assume you owned a river-bed consisting of nothing but shingle or stone, and that would be fenced round; the unimproved value of that would probably be 5s. an acre; you would deduct your fencing, although it cost as much to fence good land; in the case of poor land, you would deduct in exactly the same way the value of fencing as in the case of very rich land. Therefore I contend that the local bodies and, especially in country districts, the most of the smaller settlers in country districts in counties will derive a very great benefit from the Bill which is now before the House if it becomes law, as I sincerely hope it will. We have one estate in the district I represent of 38,000 acres odd, and the unimproved value of that estate was estimated at somewhere about 7s. 6d. an acre, because of the enormous improvements that were said to be upon it. But this forty-acre section being valued at only £6, and the adjoining lands improved by poor people being valued at £16, I contend that it is an injustice, and this Bill will do justice to those who require justice, and the people who require justice are those who are willing to spend their time and money in improving the land, and who will produce from the land. Then we have the point whether it is wrong to levy taxation on the unimproved value of land. I ask, in all common-sense, why did this Chamber last session affirm the principle that it was right to exempt improvements from taxation for all time? That was done, and therefore I say the country agreed with and asked for it. The honourable member for Hawke's Bay said that no one has

asked for this Bill—that there have been no petitions from County Councils. So far as large sections of people in my community are concerned, many have asked me personally for it, and therefore it is my intention to support the second reading of this Bill.

Major HARRIS.—I have no doubt that this matter has been brought forward at the instance of some local bodies, and, if not, I dare say the Government have received numbers of letters and communications on the subject. It has been a grievance to the people of Franklin, or a portion of them, that they have not been able to rate the absentees for years past. The grievance has been that the people there have been making roads and the absentees have been getting the benefit of their labours. The people there found they did not reap all the benefit of the labour done on their farms; they found out afterwards that the land adjacent, which has been lying idle, and which is the property of absentees, would some day be for sale, and possibly some of the residents in the district would make an offer for the land, and they would find that they had actually to pay extra money for the land, and that they had given an enhanced value to the property themselves. They feel that to be a grievance, and they will be very well pleased indeed to see this Bill passed. I have no objection to its being passed, seeing that it is optional whether the districts take advantage of it or otherwise. But there is one thing I should like to mention here. The honourable member for Inangahua holds very extreme opinions on some subjects, and he no doubt goes very far in the direction of the single-tax. We have heard from him that the land is the source of wealth. I am not going to dispute that. I do not agree with it altogether, but I wish honourable members to understand that we are not only going in for what appears simply to be local rating, but this will end in being applied to charitable-aid purposes also, and that rate will be struck on the land as well as the rate for local purposes. Looking at it in this light, as the thin end of the wedge, it appears as if it will eventually come to us like the single-tax itself. But as it is optional with the people, and as I have great confidence that the people will look into this matter before they adopt it, I shall vote for it when the division is called for on the second reading. We have heard, too, that this will be a tax on the poor man. I believe that it will mean heavier taxation on poor people than they pay at present. A certain amount of taxation has to be made up, and if we withdraw taxation from improvements the amount has to be made up by some persons. The unimproved properties will have to pay a greater amount than they do at present. As there is no compulsion, the Bill being optional, I shall vote for it.

Mr. WILLIS.—I have much pleasure in supporting this Bill. Last session I gave the general principle of this Bill my support. I consider that it is a step in the right direction. We have only to look in various parts of New Zealand at the large portions of unimproved

land which are being held for speculative purposes to know that this measure will be the means of causing that land to be improved and made profitable. It will prevent speculators from holding land in the way in which it is held now. I would also call the attention of the House to another reason why I think the principle is good. We will take the case of a man who is bringing a large piece of land under cultivation for garden or orchard purposes—it may be for a vineyard. It will take a great number of years before that man can bring the orchard to perfection, but as he is improving it his rates are constantly increasing—increasing before he receives benefit from the large amount of expenditure and labour bestowed upon it. Therefore I think it is only right that the proposed legislation should be passed. Now as to what we have heard about those who put up large buildings and factories, and who in other ways improve their sections in the towns. It must be recollected that the effect of putting up these large buildings is to improve very much indeed the places in which they are erected; and not only is there a large expenditure of money in the erection of these places, but a large number of people are employed there after these buildings are put up, and these people pay a considerable amount of taxation to the country. I think that is clear evidence that these people are contributing very largely to the revenue. I think it is perfectly fair that they should be exempted from taxation. I have much pleasure in supporting this Bill.

Mr. WARD.—I think the House will agree with me in saying that the arguments adduced by the honourable gentlemen opposite have not gone at all in the direction of answering the reasons which have induced us to hold the opinions which we do upon this question. I propose to deal with the speech of my honourable friend the member for Wairarapa first. I shall deal with one or two points to which he has alluded. The honourable member said that in introducing this Bill I did not do the subject justice; and that opinion was re-echoed by the honourable member for Hawke's Bay. When those honourable gentlemen read my remarks in *Hansard* I venture to say they will find what I said was very interesting, and, if they failed at the time to catch my words and arguments, that is a reflection on them, and does not reflect upon me. The honourable gentleman gave two cases. He referred to two properties, both improved to their utmost, and each valued at £9,000, one with improvements to the value of £6,000—and the other with improvements only worth £1,500. The honourable gentleman told us that the less-improved property was to be taxed two and a half times more than the other property. That was his argument. Does the honourable gentleman ask this House to accept arguments of that sort as being likely to convince us that the impossibility to place improvements of a greater value than £1,500 on a property whose unimproved value is £7,500 is a case which should be accepted as a rule? It only points to this:

Mr. Stevens

that if the land worth £7,500, and which was so little improved, was improved to its utmost, then it goes without any saying on my part, or on the part of any other honourable member, that the value of the land would be reduced. That is a clear answer to that.

Mr. BUCHANAN.—The two properties I mentioned are giving the same net return per annum, and are therefore of equal capital value.

Mr. WARD.—Under existing conditions?

Mr. BUCHANAN.—Yes, under existing conditions.

Mr. WARD.—The argument of the honourable gentleman was that the £7,500 unimproved property was going to be embargued in an excessive manner under this system of taxation. I say, if his argument is correct, then clearly under the operation of this law the unimproved value of the land would require to fall accordingly. I think that clearly must take place.

An Hon. MEMBER.—That is ridiculous.

Mr. WARD.—It may be ridiculous to the honourable member, but I say it must work out in that way. My honourable friend gave another instance of a piece of land with a bridle-track through it. I want to know what is the difference between a bridle-track and a widow's road. There is not very much difference. I think the honourable gentleman had the old property of the widow still in view when he adduced this argument. I was very much surprised to hear him say that he wanted to know whether there was any demand on the part of the local bodies for this change. I tell the honourable gentleman that there has been a considerable demand from the local bodies for this change, and members representing various constituencies have also made representations to the Government in support of it. A strong representation has been made from different parts of the country upon the subject. The honourable gentleman went on to argue that the man who does not improve his property loses largely by it. What about the man who allows his land to remain idle, and who, by the exertions of others, receives the unearned increment? Does he lose his land?

An Hon. MEMBER.—Who are they?

Mr. WARD.—I could give many instances. I know a case in my own district, adjoining the Town of Invercargill, where an enormous value has been given to a piece of idle land, and which has been unused for the last twenty-five years. That land has been enhanced in value to an enormous extent. There are also other cases all over the colony. My honourable friend the member for Wairarapa said that the Government cared nothing for justice, and that they are simply playing to the gallery in this matter. I can only regret that he has such a poor opinion of the Government, and I can assure the honourable gentleman that very strong representations have been made to the Government upon this matter, and, while the Bill may not

perhaps affect the honourable gentleman's district—I do not know whether it does so or not—there are many districts in the colony which have made strong representations to us to bring about this change. The honourable member for Wellington Suburbs said that a highly-improved district would be able to outvote the poorer and less improved parts of the district, and thus impose excessive taxation on the poorer district. I would point out that, in the first place, this Bill is optional. It is optional on the part of the local bodies to adopt the measure, and they will not decide to adopt it unless the ratepayers are assured that it is a desirable thing to do. I think in this matter we can trust the good sense and judgment of the local bodies. Then, the Native members raised some points in connection with this Bill, and I think it is only right to say a word or two in reply to the questions which they raised. The honourable member for Wellington City (Sir R. Stout) also said that under this proposal the rates on the Natives would be double what they are now, and that the Europeans would be exempt. I differ from the honourable member in making that statement, and I want to point out to honourable members this very important fact: Between 1882 and 1890 the colony paid to local bodies in respect of Native land about £60,000, and at the present time there is owing to the colony on this account a sum of over £50,000.

12.30. With the information I have, I say that the colony will never get back that £50,000. I ask honourable members, in discussing this important matter, and I ask the Natives themselves, why should there be invidious distinctions between the two races in connection with legislation of this kind? They are wanting to put people who occupy Native lands in a superior position to people occupying European lands, and in my opinion that ought not to be, and the members of the Native race should assist, in a matter of this nature, in seeing that fair-play and justice are done to both races. It is provided that all Native lands, with European, shall pay taxation; and that raises the argument of the honourable member for Wellington City (Sir R. Stout), who said that under this proposal the rates on the lands of Natives would be doubled, and the Europeans were to be exempt altogether. It is not so. Our experience from 1882 to 1890, and up to the present time, has not been at all satisfactory, and, as far as the colony is concerned, it seems hopeless to expect to recoup the Treasury. Upon Native lands is the responsibility of the money not having been repaid.

An Hon. MEMBER.—No, no.

Mr. WARD.—I simply state the fact as it came before me. The honourable member for Wellington City (Sir R. Stout) gave us the case of a property valued at £40,000, with £30,000 improvements, and a land valuation of £10,000. The honourable gentleman selected an individual case; he selected the Government Insurance Building, and he gave that as a case where the improvements were such that if they

were deducted the rateable value would be very much less than would yield the amount required, and it would be necessary to obtain more from the smaller ratepayers in this city; and he went on to point out that, while this system was going to relieve the large property-holders, the people in Newtown, for instance, would not be relieved at all: in other words, instead of paying, say, 1d. in the pound, they would require to pay 2d. on the unimproved value. If the honourable gentleman wanted to give a fair argument, let him, in the first place, give the value of the land upon which the Government Insurance Building is erected, and, instead of taking a single case, he ought to have taken the value of the unimproved lands in the City of Wellington and based his argument upon that value. In the same return that the honourable member was quoting from when he gave these figures—the portion of statistics attached to the report of the Land- and Income-tax Department for the year 1892—the improved value and the unimproved value of property in the City of Wellington are stated as follow: The value of improvements is £2,432,749; unimproved value, £3,440,182. Honourable members will clearly see that in this City of Wellington the unimproved value is considerably in excess of the value of improvements on the land taken alone: so where is the fairness of taking an individual case, which might be applied to any system that you may introduce in this country for levying taxation? The same remarks might apply to the arguments the honourable member gave about the country lands. What were his own figures? That the total value of land amounted to £86,000,000; he gave the improvements at £28,000,000, leaving a balance of unimproved value of £58,000,000. When the honourable member quoted from the figures, he gave, to my mind, one of the strongest reasons why it is desirable to give local bodies the power of levying upon the unimproved value, if they elect to do so. I think his own argument was illogical. The honourable member and the honourable member for Wellington Suburbs raised the case of the value of the land upon which the Government Insurance Building and other buildings are erected. That land is practically reclaimed land; and he gave us also the case of Barrett's Hotel, and sundry other cases of that kind. Now, the first case was used for the purpose of illustrating the unimproved value as against the improved value, but I might tell the honourable gentleman that nearly twenty years ago land in this city was selling at £160 a foot. Sixteen years ago the old Supreme Court building was sold at that price. Take the case of the market-gardeners, which the honourable member also urged. He said that if this proposal were given effect to it would affect them more than any one else. I ask, are not market-gardens frequently highly improved? Assuredly they are; and I say that in that case the value of improvements would be deducted. Does the honourable gentleman mean to tell us that if the land on which these market-gardens are

situated in Wellington were wanted for building-sites there is not plenty of land close to Wellington to which these market-gardens could be removed? I see no hardship in that. Then, the honourable gentleman made a sweeping assertion, and one which I was absolutely astonished to hear. He suggested that this Bill was against what is advocated by the English Liberals. I was very much surprised to hear the honourable gentleman make this statement, as the facts are entirely against it. The Glasgow City Council has refused to make further improvements until a tax such as this Bill imposes is imposed; and the London County Council has repeatedly advocated something on the same lines as this Bill. The result of this was the Betterments Bill, which passed the House of Commons twice, but was each time rejected by the House of Lords. I think this clearly shows that the Liberals in England favour what we are trying to do here. How this system will affect the farmers was another argument, and one case was given of a man having to pay 16s. 8d. less if this system were adopted. I will tell the House how the farmers will be affected. Supposing every county in the colony changes its system, and, instead of levying upon the improved value, levies upon the unimproved value. Who elect the members of the County Councils? The farmers. And most undoubtedly, then, if a County Council changes the system of rating it will be because the farmers wish it, and those settlers who are opposed to this system will be a bar to its coming into effect in many districts where they oppose it. In some of the districts most undoubtedly they are in favour of some change, and, if carried out, I ask, if this is going to be injurious to the farmers, then, as an honourable member has pointed out, why should we have exempted improvements under the system of the land- and income-tax? The result of that system shows it to be quite the contrary. I am sorry the honourable member for Wakatipu is not here, as I want to deal with one of the points he raised. He took the case of the mining claims, and he wanted to know if it was right that rates under this system should be levied upon mining properties. I ask honourable members if they realise what has been done by the abolition of the gold duty in this colony. By the abolition of that duty the local finance of County Councils was materially changed, and the result of this interference with local bodies' finance was that it has been crippled ever since. It chiefly affects mining districts. If, under this system, a small proportion of the money to be raised can be contributed to the finance of these local bodies, so as to make up the loss which they have felt so much since the abolition of the gold duty, it should be done. I do not, myself, think, in the case of the water-races, that the proposed change, if made, would press very heavily upon them. Then the honourable gentleman gave us a case of the unimproved poor land as against the rich land, and he gave us the same case as the honourable member for Wellington City (Sir R. Stout) and

Mr. Ward

the honourable member for Hawke's Bay gave. In connection with this matter, I will take the case of a property of two thousand acres valued at 10s. an acre. The value of this area would be £1,000; and I take the same acreage, valued at £5 an acre, which gives us £10,000. Now, I think it will be admitted that poor land of that value can be improved to the extent of 10s. an acre, and the rich land can be improved to the extent of £5 an acre.

An Hon. MEMBER.—It is impossible to do that.

Mr. WARD.—I say that two thousand acres of that land in this colony, valued at 10s. an acre, can be improved to the extent of 10s. an acre, and similarly land valued at £5 an acre can be improved a further £5 an acre. Both of these cases are possible; and with the improvements put upon them, the rich land pays ten times the amount of rates on the unimproved value, and under this system it will continue to do so. In many instances it is not fair to compare land under the existing system, as there are cases where poor land is rated too highly in proportion to rich land, and that need not continue to be the case. The honourable member for Waitemata raised an objection to this Bill which was more in the nature of an assertion than an argument. In my opinion a great many of the professed arguments he adduced against this Bill are simply mere assertions. The honourable gentleman made a statement that, because 10, 15, or 20 per cent. of the ratepayers in any district might demand a poll, the Act would be unsettling in its effects. That clearly shows, to my mind, that the honourable member has not read the Bill, or, if he has done so, he has not grasped the purport of it. If the ratepayers demand it, a poll is to be taken, and, if the proposal to rate on the unimproved value is negatived, no similar proposal can be put for three years. Then, the honourable gentleman expressed himself as very uncertain as to the operation of clause 9, and he said that he did not understand what the meaning of that clause was. I will tell the House what it means: If a county adopts the Act it means that in that county where the Act is in force the other bodies in the county must adopt the Act also. This county then becomes the dominant local body for the time. But if the Counties Act is not in force, and a Road Board decides to adopt the Act, the fact of the Road Board adopting it would not compel the other Road Boards in the county to adopt it; and if a borough adopted it, then the borough would not regulate any other local body whose district was outside the jurisdiction of the borough. Before I sit down, there are one or two of the arguments adduced by the honourable member for Hawke's Bay that I should like to touch upon. The honourable gentleman said that evidently the Bill was brought in to please the honourable member for Inangahua. I recognise the honourable member for Inangahua to be a very consistent and very vigorous and conscientious advocate of the single-tax. The honourable gentleman forgot the fact that this

Bill was introduced into the House before the honourable member for Inangahua was a member of the House at all: this being so, when the honourable gentleman is endeavouring to accuse every other honourable gentleman of being a single-taxer because he supports the Bill, I think his argument does not apply. He expressed the opinion that the damage done by taxing absentees was far greater than the revenue derived from the property of those absentees through the adoption of this system. The honourable gentleman is, of course, justified in advocating that absentees should not be taxed, but I hold very strongly that they should be taxed, and not only do I think it will be good for this colony, but I am glad to see that the other colonies are following our example, and have decided to tax them too. With regard to the argument that this system should be compulsory, if that argument is right, then I say that no local body should be allowed to have any differentiation of system, so far as local taxation goes under the existing law; it should be compulsory for them to levy one rate, and one rate only. I differ entirely from the contention. I believe in the optional system. I only wish to say that in my opinion this Bill is in general harmony with the main system which is adopted in the colony of levying on the unimproved value of land under the land- and income-tax system. I say the local bodies have made a strong demand on the Government to get the option of introducing this system, and, if the honourable gentlemen opposite have not heard that there has been an agitation in this direction, all I can say is that they must be very materially out of touch with the people in this colony.

The House divided on the question, "That the Bill be read a second time."

AYES, 37.

Buddo	Kelly, J. W.	Parata
Buick	Lang	Pinkerton
Carnoross	Lawry	Pirani
Carnell	Maslin	Saunders
Carroll	McGowan	Seddon
Collins	McKenzie, J.	Smith, G. J.
Duncan	McKenzie, R.	Stevens
Flatman	McLachlan	Tanner
Graham	Meredith	Ward.
Guinness	Mills	
Hall	Montgomery	<i>Tellers.</i>
Hogg	Morrison	Harris
Houston	O'Regan	Willis.

NOES, 4.

Earnshaw	<i>Tellers.</i>
Heke.	Buchanan
	Mackenzie, T.

PAIRS.

<i>For.</i>	<i>Against.</i>
Cadman	Mitchelson
Hall-Jones	Te Ao
Hutchison, W.	Crowther
Joyce	Green
Kelly, W.	Fraser
Larnach	Stout
Mackintosh	Pere

McGuire	Allen
Reeves	Massey
Smith, E. M.	Duthie
Wilson.	Russell, W. R.

Majority for, 33.

Bill read a second time.

The House adjourned at one o'clock a.m.

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

Wednesday, 5th September, 1894.

Third Reading—Gaming Bill—Labour Bills Committee—State Forests—Divorce Bill—Dunedin Loan Conversion Bill—Riverton Harbour Board Empowering Bill.

The Hon. the SPEAKER took the chair at half-past two o'clock.

PRAYERS.

THIRD READING.

Kaitangata Relief Fund Transfer Bill.

GAMING BILL.

On the motion of the Hon. Mr. MACGREGOR, the Hon. Mr. McLean, the Hon. Mr. Ormond, and the mover were appointed Managers for the Council to conduct a Conference with the House of Representatives on this Bill.

LABOUR BILLS COMMITTEE.

The Hon. Mr. MACGREGOR moved, *That the name of the Hon. Mr. Stewart be added to the Labour Bills Committee.*

The Hon. Mr. SHRIMSKI had not the slightest objection to the name of the Hon. Mr. Stewart being placed on the Committee, but he wished to say that during the whole course of his public life he had never known an instance of a private member taking upon himself to recommend the appointment of members to a Select Committee, especially when such Committee was appointed for the purpose of dealing with Government measures. Unless the Government had given permission to the honourable gentleman to do so, he thought that this was not a proper course to take in conducting the business of the Council.

The Hon. Sir P. A. BUCKLEY was sorry there should be any soreness about this matter, but he, and any honourable members who had occupied his position there, knew that there was the greatest possible difficulty in selecting members for Committees, and in seeing that the business was distributed fairly. Some members might be on too many Committees, and some might not be on enough. Some honourable members wished to be placed on certain Committees, while others desired to be taken off. He had no feeling in the matter other than a desire to see that the Government business was carried on as well as possible. He was bound to say that the Hon. Mr. MacGregor had asked him on the previous day if there was any objection to this motion being made, and he replied that there was not. He had no

desire to offend the keen susceptibilities of his honourable friend, but he wished to state that, when his honourable friend asked him why he was not placed on the Committee, he (Sir P. A. Buckley) replied that it was because he was not in favour of the Bills. His honourable friend seemed to take offence at that, although there was no offence intended. He had thought their friendship was sufficiently great to warrant him in taking a liberty which he, perhaps, might not have attempted with other honourable members. The honourable gentleman stated the previous day that he was going to leave him. He hoped the honourable gentleman would soon think better of it and return to him. His colleague the Hon. Mr. Montgomery had been charged with appointing these Committees, but no one had anything to do with the appointing of this Committee but himself. He regretted very much if he had not placed on the Committee any one who desired to be upon it; but, as he had said before, it was a very difficult matter to select honourable gentlemen for these Committees. He was sure no one could attend to his duties more assiduously and regularly than his honourable friend, and he had told him frankly the reason why he was not placed on that Committee.

The Hon. Mr. SHRIMSKI begged to apologise to the Hon. Mr. Montgomery if he had said anything offensive to him. He did think, after all the years he had been on that Committee, he had some right to feel hurt at being left out on the ground that he was in opposition to the Bills. He remembered the time when twelve gentlemen were appointed to the Council, the reason for the appointments, as stated by the Colonial Secretary, being that the only two supporters of the Government in the Council were himself and the Hon. Mr. Dignan. It seemed, now that the honourable gentleman had got the twelve new men, that he could be ungrateful to those who stood by him when in need.

The Hon. Mr. MONTGOMERY was pleased to accept the apology of the honourable gentleman.

The Hon. Mr. OLIVER rose to call attention to the fact that the Attorney-General appeared to assume that there were parties in the Council, when he stated that the Hon. Mr. Shrimski had left him. He (Mr. Oliver) persisted in stating that there was no party division to be discerned in the Council at all. They voted in that Council as their consciences and their discernment might direct. So far as he was aware, there was no Opposition in that Council; and he thought it would be very much to be deplored if there was a recognition of any such division.

The Hon. Mr. BONAR had not the slightest objection to the Hon. Mr. Stewart being added to the Labour Bills Committee, but he wished to ask how many members there were already on that Committee. He understood there were now fourteen. Under the Standing Order, clause 162, only nine members were allowed; and he thought it was very objectionable that

a Select Committee should consist of more than a quorum of the Council. He thought the numbers should not be increased. It was very desirable that the Hon. Mr. Stewart should be on the Committee, but he did not think the Committee should be so large as to be able to control the Council on any special measure. He did not think this motion should be carried without suspension of the Standing Orders.

The Hon. Mr. RIGG did not see why another member should not be added to the Committee. He was pleased to see so great a desire shown by honourable members to get on that Committee, as it showed the very great interest taken by them in labour questions. He trusted the motion would be accepted.

The Hon. Mr. REYNOLDS said there was another matter in connection with the appointment of Committees he would like to mention. He thought the proper way would be for the Council to make the appointments by ballot. Up to a session or two ago he had been regularly on the Waste Lands Committee,—in fact, ever since he had been a member of the Council,—and he thought it a strange thing that his name should have been omitted from that Committee two or three sessions ago. Not that he cared whether he was upon the Committee or not, but he thought that the old members of the Council should not be struck off in that way. A little infusion of new blood was sometimes a good thing, but he considered that the old members, who had had experience in dealing with the lands of the colony ever since the introduction of the Constitution Act, such as himself, could be more useful on the Committee. He considered he had been treated most discourteously by the Government, not only in that matter, but in removing him as a Commissioner of the Education Reserves in Otago, and also as a member of the High School Board of Governors, without a single word or letter giving him any reason for his being so removed. And why? Because he happened to be in opposition to the views of the Government.

The Hon. Sir P. A. BUCKLEY.—I thought there was no party in this Council.

The Hon. Mr. REYNOLDS said he was in opposition to the Government, or rather to the Minister of Lands, in connection with these reserves, and he had been protecting the reserves in the interests of those to whom they belonged against the encroachments of the Minister.

The Hon. Sir P. A. BUCKLEY rose to a point of order, as the discussion, he thought, was becoming rather personal. His honourable friend was referring to matters about which, if he were to give notice, he would promise him the very fullest possible investigation. With regard to what his honourable friend had said about being removed at the instance of the Government because he was in opposition to them, why, only just a few moments ago they heard an honourable gentleman state that there was no party in the Council. He did not believe that himself, because there was a very strong party in the

Council. He would like to say one word now in explanation of the reason why his honourable friend was not placed on the Waste Lands Committee, and he regretted the reason very much. His honourable friend was not in Wellington at the time, because he was not well, and, in order to relieve him from the burden and trouble of this Committee, he took upon himself not to place him on the Committee. There was no honourable member in the Council who was held in higher esteem than the honourable gentleman, and he knew very well that he (Sir P. A. Buckley) would be the last man in the Council to remove him from any position or from any Committee in the Council against his wish.

The Hon. Mr. RICHARDSON thought the proceedings which had just taken place showed how necessary it was to comply with the Standing Orders. If the Standing Orders had been abided by in this case, probably none of this unpleasantness would have taken place. By Standing Order 162 it was necessary to suspend the Standing Orders before the number of a Committee could be increased beyond the limit, unless notice had been given.

The Hon. Mr. REYNOLDS wished to make a personal explanation. He did not say that he was opposed to the Government. He said he was opposed to the policy of the Government with regard to the education reserves in Otago. He might not have said it in those words, but that was what he implied.

The Hon. Sir G. S. WHITMORE believed the Hon. the Colonial Secretary was perfectly willing at all times to place members on a Committee if they wished it. He had been himself on the Waste Lands Committee for a good many years, but it did not trouble him that he was left out of that Committee, as he felt sure that it was done for a good reason, and the Colonial Secretary had the responsibility.

The Hon. the SPEAKER said the Council could add names to a Committee after it was formed. He would suggest that the motion be altered so as to read, "That Standing Order 162 be suspended so far as to allow the addition of the name of the Hon. Mr. Stewart to the Labour Bills Committee."

The Hon. Mr. SHRIMSKI thought that notice should be given of this motion.

The Hon. the SPEAKER said there was provision made for the whole Council to take action if they chose to do so.

Motion, as amended,—namely, "That Standing Order No. 162 be suspended so far as to allow the addition of the name of the Hon. Mr. Stewart to the Labour Bills Committee,"—agreed to.

STATE FORESTS.

The Hon. Mr. McCULLOUGH, in moving the motion standing in his name, would give the reason why he placed it on the Order Paper. It would be in the recollection of members of the Council that on the 24th day of August a paper was laid on the table by the Attorney-General withdrawing from the operation of the

State Forests Act of 1885 certain portions of land—(1) 760 acres, and (2) 690 acres—in the Southland Land District. It would be also remembered that during last session there were three applications made under the Act of 1888 withdrawing from the operation of the previous Act of 1885 certain areas of land. The Hon. Mr. Bowen on that occasion had drawn attention to the fact that these forest-lands were being taken for settlement purposes, and, in order to prevent their being taken without the knowledge of the Council, the Standing Orders were altered so that the papers could be sent to the Waste Lands Committee and a report laid before the Council before any action could be taken. No doubt the object the honourable gentleman had in view was to call particular attention to the dealings with the lands set apart under the Act of 1885. Honourable members would be aware that the Act he had quoted from was placed on the statute-book for the distinct purpose of setting apart areas of forest-land in New Zealand as State forests, in order thereby to prevent undue waste of timber, to provide timber for future industrial purposes, and to provide for the proper conservation of the climatic conditions by the preservation of bush growth. It would only be necessary for him to say that, if the course referred to were proceeded with,—that of taking lands so set apart for the purposes he had just quoted from the preamble of the Act of 1885,—it was only a matter of time when there would not be any forest reserves at all. Clause 3 of the Act of 1885 gave the Governor in Council power, by Proclamation, to “set apart forest lands forming part of the Crown lands in New Zealand as and for State forests within the provisions of this Act.” Therefore the motion could be acted upon by the Government if they thought fit. He was not objecting so much to the lands being withdrawn from the operations of the Act of 1883 for such reasons as that given in the paper laid before the Council by the Attorney-General—namely, that the timber of any value had been cut, and the land was required for settlement. That was a reasonable excuse, but he did think, when portions of forest-land were taken under the provisions of the Act of 1888, an equal area at least should be set apart in the same provincial district in which the land so withdrawn was situated. He thought that was a reasonable position to take up, because then it enabled the intention of the Forests Act of 1885 to be carried out. If no such course was taken, the statute was practically evaded, and in the course of time it would have no effect in New Zealand. That it was desirable to set apart lands for the purpose no doubt every member of the Council would agree. Therefore it seemed to him reasonable that, when these lands were withdrawn from the operation of the Act of 1885, an equal area of forest-land should be set apart in the same provincial district.

Motion made, and question proposed, “*That, in the opinion of this Council, it is desirable,*

Hon. Mr. McCullough

whenever land which has been set apart as a State forest shall be declared as no longer within the provisions of ‘The New Zealand State Forests Act, 1885,’ that an equal area of forest-land be set apart as a State forest in the provincial district in which the land withdrawn is situate.”—(Hon. Mr. McCULLOUGH.)

The Hon. Mr. BOWEN was glad that the honourable gentleman had brought the motion forward, for he really believed that very soon there would be no forest-land in New Zealand, unless these constant encroachments on reserves were stopped. These reservations were made in the interests of the public, with a view of preserving for the benefit of future generations a fair amount of land where the forest had been growing for centuries—a forest that could not be replaced within two or three centuries to come. If the Government, who were the custodians of these forests, were themselves the aggressors, and took possession of them for settlement or other purposes, he was afraid that this reservation of forests would be a mere idle ceremony. He understood the reason given for the taking of this particular land was that the forest had been destroyed upon it, and that it was wanted for settlement. How was it that the trees were destroyed upon this land? There was surely no use in reserving forest-land if bush-fellers were allowed to go on it and cut it to pieces. That was not the intention of the reserve. He did not believe that these reservations would be of any use without a regular system of forest-conservancy. One Government after another had tried, in different ways, to preserve the forests, and notably that of Sir Julius Vogel, who had done his best, and had brought in Bills two or three times to get something done not only to preserve the forest, but also to manage and utilise the reserves. But too many vested interests were concerned in bush-cutting, and the people generally seemed blind to the irreparable mischief done by the reckless destruction of the forests. In many countries the same thing had happened, and lately in India and elsewhere steps had been taken to preserve the forests, with some success, and it was found that more valuable timber was got out of forests thus preserved than out of forests where men were allowed to cut timber just as they pleased. He thought that the motion was a very reasonable one, and felt pretty sure the Council would accept it. But he did not think, himself, that this resolution should be taken as an acquiescence on the part of the Legislature in the policy of interfering with existing reserves; or as even a conditional assertion that they acceded to, or approved of, the taking of any of this land. The settlers of the future would be the sufferers in a material sense from the present disfigurement of the country. He could not conceive what was the object of encouraging Arbor Days and schemes for planting timber which would not be available for many generations, while they recklessly threw away the whole of the magnificent timber indigenous to New Zealand.

The Hon. Mr. KELLY said this was, no doubt, a very important question, but it was a very difficult one to deal with. He contended that no forest reserves should be made of land that was fit for settlement. They should be made in rough country. Take Taranaki, for instance, which was practically all forest: there could be no settlement if all the grown timber-trees were to be preserved for future use. Did they mean to say that, instead of utilising the timber for the purposes of the present generation, it should be reserved for a future generation?

The Hon. Mr. BOWEN.—Not all of it.

The Hon. Mr. KELLY.—So long as forest reserves were made of mountain-ranges and their lower spurs, which were the sources of the springs and streams, the operations would be beneficial; but if the attempt went beyond that, and the colony went into the business of growing timber for sale, it would involve a large expenditure and a large staff.

The Hon. Mr. BOWEN said it would pay well.

The Hon. Mr. KELLY very much doubted it. The best way of dealing with forest-covered land was to utilise it for agricultural purposes. The forest trees, if not cut down and utilised, would simply rot; they arrived at the stage of maturity, and then declined. He could understand the reservation for climatic purposes of large areas of forest-land which were unfitted for close settlement. When reservations were made in large areas in that way it was very beneficial to the country; but to reserve large areas of agricultural land was impolitic, as the land could be applied to better purposes. Of course, the timber on the land ought to be used as much as possible for commercial purposes; but the best way of using the land was to get it under grass as speedily as possible, and get population on it. He was not at all afraid of there being no timber left for use in the country. He was now using timber that he had planted himself for firewood purposes. He thought it would be a serious mistake if they were going to reserve large areas of agricultural land for forest reserves. He approved of the principle of making forest reserves if the lands dealt with were not suitable for agricultural purposes. He would be in favour of the motion; but it was a matter which required great care, for if forest reserves were made in the vicinity of settlement, without provision being made for proper supervision, and for labour to be employed to thin the bush and provide against forest fires, the reservation would be to all intents and purposes a sham, so far as providing timber for the future was concerned.

The Hon. Mr. ORMOND hoped the Government would give consideration to the motion. To his mind, the matter was a very important one indeed. The different portions of the colony had in the past had a certain amount of reservation made for the purpose of creating forest reserves; and different considerations had led to these reservations being set aside. The honourable gentleman who had just sat

down had spoken entirely as to the practical use of the land. But there were other considerations. The climatic condition of the country was a very great consideration indeed, and would be seriously affected if the present system were pursued of gradually absorbing all the reserves for so-called purposes of settlement. In some cases, to his knowledge, forest reserves had been taken and given away for what was called settlement where settlement did not succeed. That was very much to be regretted, and he hoped the Government would endeavour to see that this course was not continued in future. Almost every member of the Council knew the land in the neighbourhood of the Manawatu Gorge. There was a beautiful tract of forest-hills of great climatic use, and of great beauty there. A large reserve had been made in that locality of some twenty thousand acres, nine-tenths, at any rate, of which was quite unsuitable for settlement, consisting of poor hills, but covered with beautiful bush, and a most lovely object if kept for that purpose. Within the last two or three years persons near that locality had agitated and obtained portion of that land for the purposes of settlement. He had had an opportunity of seeing the portion taken, on the eastern side of the mountain-range. It was exceedingly poor land, and had been given to an association. He thought some twenty or thirty persons had taken it up. Two persons had taken up land and occupied it, and their occupation had spoil the beauty of the whole of that part of the forest. There were blackened portions of spurs of hills where formerly there had been a tract of beautiful forest-country, and there was a danger that from these portions fire would spread and destroy the remainder. That was only one instance of many which could be pointed out in which the breaking-in of these forests had been of the greatest detriment to the colony. If it had to be done for settlement, then the motion of his honourable friend asked that a similar provision should be made in a suitable locality to take the place of that which was taken away, and he thought the Government could without difficulty, and he hoped they would, agree to that proposition. As to the argument of the Hon. Mr. Kelly, that these reserves militated against settlement, he thought they knew by experience that reserves were generally taken where that would not be the case, at any rate, during the present generation, and they were conserving for future generations that which would be to them of immense value.

The Hon. Sir P. A. BUCKLEY said no Government having the interests of the colony at heart would object to the motion. It was quite possible that in some districts the land taken might not have been replaced, but the remedy was entirely in the hands of the Legislature. They were careful enough—and he was very pleased to see it—on a recent occasion to guard themselves by referring any such papers as came within the subject-matter of the motion, and were placed on the table by resolution, to

the Waste Lands Committee, and, if he recollected aright, a resolution of both Houses was necessary before any land could be taken. He thought they might accept this motion as a fair indication of the care which honourable members seemed to take in conserving the State forests of the country.

Motion agreed to.

DIVORCE BILL.

The Hon. Captain BAILLIE wished, before this Bill was resumed in Committee, to ask the Hon. the Speaker's ruling on a point of order. It had been discovered since the Bill was last before the Committee that one of the divisionists was erroneously declared. In subsection (4) of clause 8 it had been proposed that the first line and a half be struck out, and the division was declared as—Ayes, 15; and Noes, 13. It should have been Ayes, 13, and Noes, 15.

The Hon. the SPEAKER referred the honourable gentleman to Standing Order 105, which provided for the course to be pursued.

IN COMMITTEE.

On taking the chair the Hon. the CHAIRMAN said that he would rectify the mistake, and now declared that the "Noes" had it, and that, consequently, subsection (4) was struck out of the Bill.

The Hon. Mr. SHRIMSKI moved, That the Chairman do leave the chair.

The Committee divided.

AYES, 21.

Acland	Holmes	Shrimski
Bonar	Kenny	Stewart
Bowen	Kerr	Wahawaha
Buckley	Ormond	Walker, L.
Dignan	Pharazyn	Whitmore
Feldwick	Reynolds	Whyte
Graco	Richardson	Williams.

NOES, 13.

Barnicoat	MacGregor	Oliver
Bolt	McCullough	Rigg
Jenkinson	McLean	Stevens
Jennings	Montgomery	Swanson.
Kelly		

Majority for, 8.

Motion agreed to.

DUNEDIN LOAN CONVERSION BILL.

IN COMMITTEE.

Clause 16.—Interest on, currency of, and form of debentures.

The Hon. Mr. McLEAN moved the following proviso: "Provided that no debentures issued under this Act shall be sold at a price that will produce to the purchaser a greater interest than $4\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. per annum."

The Committee divided.

AYES, 16.

Bolt	Kerr	Rigg
Bowen	McLean	Stevens
Grace	Montgomery	Stewart
Jennings	Ormond	Wahawaha
Kelly	Richardson	Williams.
Kenny		

Hon. Sir P. A. Buckley

NOES, 13.

Barnicoat	Jenkinson	Swanson
Bonar	MacGregor	Walker, L.
Buckley	Oliver	Whitmore
Dignan	Reynolds	Whyte.
Feldwick		

Majority for, 8.

Amendment agreed to.

Bill reported.

RIVERTON HARBOUR BOARD EMPOWERING BILL.

The Hon. Mr. FELDWICK said this Bill was entirely of a permissive character. It was to allow the Riverton Harbour Board to go so far and no farther. It asked power for the Board to negotiate with a syndicate of capitalists in England for the construction of a harbour at a point of the coast at the mouth of the Aparima River. The harbour in question was three-fourths made by Nature, and required only a mole of a very moderate length to make it one of the finest harbours in New Zealand. It had been said that the proposal in this Bill involved a matter of public policy, and he thought it did, in respect to harbour construction. It might have been well if years ago, in respect to certain harbours that could be mentioned, such a policy as was contemplated by this Bill had been adopted. The Bill had a preamble of considerable length, which set forth its object pretty clearly. It gave the Harbour Board power to treat with owners of capital with a view to the construction of a harbour, and to their subsequently taking the rates and any other benefits they could derive from the harbour. The Bill was in no way final. If a good offer was made to the Board and through them to the colony they were compelled to come to the House and ask for full powers. Clause 3 gave authority to negotiate with any company—

"... for any term not exceeding fifty years, upon such terms and conditions as to the said Council may seem proper: Provided that such lease shall provide for the taking over by the Government of New Zealand, at any time after the expiration of a period of not less than ten years after the execution of such lease, if they think proper, of such harbour-works as may be constructed by such company or body of persons."

The next clause said,—

"Such company or body of persons shall hold such rights, powers, property, and privileges upon the same trusts and for the same purposes as the same are now held by the said Corporation, and the same shall be transferred by the said Corporation to the said company or body of persons by deed under the common seal of the said Corporation."

Clause 5 provided—"Corporation may enter into agreement to transfer rights." He might state that certain plans were prepared and in the possession of the member in charge of the Bill in the other House. These had somehow disappeared in the Local Bills Committee of the other House; but, although that was so, it was immaterial, because any persons taking up the work must produce proper plans, specifica-

tions, and estimates, and would also have to satisfy the Government as to their financial ability to carry out the work. He begged to move, *That the Bill be now read the second time.*

The Hon. Mr. RICHARDSON thought, as the Committee had reported the Bill to be a matter of public policy, the Council should hear what the representative of the Government had to say on the measure before passing it. He was aware that engineers of some eminence had reported from time to time as to the feasibility of the works in connection with the proposed harbour. He himself had been called upon, in an official capacity, to visit the locality when the subject was mooted on a previous occasion. He believed the reports of engineers who had more recently gone into the matter had been to the effect that a very large expenditure would have to be incurred to make anything like a safe harbour. The honourable gentleman, in moving the second reading, had stated that it only required a mole; but that would have to be of dimensions that would probably startle some of the members of the Council, for they would have to deal with 9 fathoms depth of water. The Council was fully aware that there was already a very fine harbour at the Bluff, and it was a very great question whether anything should be done to encourage another harbour so close to the Bluff. This was also a new departure in the way of the creation of harbours. For his part, he had always been of opinion that the Government ought to retain in their own hands the power to construct harbours. But, from time to time, various local bodies had obtained authority to make harbours in different situations. He very much questioned whether, with the experience the colony now had of the matter, if it had to be done over again, the Government would allow any local body, or any body outside of themselves, to create harbours anywhere along the coast. He did not wish to move any hostile motion to this Bill, but he thought before proceeding with it any further the Council were entitled to have some good reasons given them by the Government why the course hitherto adopted for the construction of harbours in New Zealand should be departed from, as it appeared it was to be in this case.

The Hon. Mr. BOLT said this Bill dealt with the interests of a very sanguine and very aspiring community. Twenty years ago the question of a harbour for Riverton had agitated the mind of General and Provincial Governments; and it was important to know that in 1874 the Provincial Government of Otago was advised to set apart three thousand acres of land as an endowment for providing a harbour for Riverton. He did not know whether that land was so set apart or not, but he believed in 1878 some twenty-two acres in all was set apart for that purpose. That land was contiguous to the Borough of Riverton, and, but for its contiguity to that wealthy and populous borough, it would have been altogether insufficient for such a purpose. He presumed that,

seeing it was contiguous to that borough, notwithstanding the smallness of the area, it was held to be of sufficient value to enable the carrying-out of such a large work as that now contemplated. But, apart from the endowment altogether, the Borough of Riverton had certain special natural advantages connected with it which he thought should be taken into consideration. First, he would point out that behind the town lay an extensive area of wheat-fields, with large fertile areas of pastoral country, in the County of Wallace. That was immediately behind the Borough of Riverton, and, as honourable members knew, for many miles along the coast there was an untold and inexhaustible store of wealth in the shape of fish swimming along the coast and all but touching the very stones that would go to make the new harbour—a store of wealth which had never yet been operated on by the arts of the fisherman. Then, there were the fertile oyster-beds of Stewart Island; and, above all that, there was the untold wealth of gold which still lay in such ample abundance embedded in Wilson's River. With such resources as that he thought the Council might feel itself justified in passing this Bill—that was, if it properly estimated these resources, and looked forward to the advantages that the Borough of Riverton might reasonably expect not only in getting a substantial harbour, a harbour such as would meet all the ordinary mercantile requirements, but which would be also an excellent rendezvous for Her Majesty's vessels now on the Australasian station. Another reason why he thought they should give assistance to Riverton was that, he noticed, in 1886 the population was 926, and in 1891 it was 843. If that rate of progress went on it was quite evident that at no very distant period it would be as difficult to find the site of the Borough of Riverton as to find that of a prehistoric village at the bottom of a Swiss lake. He trusted that honourable gentlemen would look at the Bill in the light in which he had placed it, look at all the advantages surrounding it, and deal with the Bill as it deserved.

The Hon. Sir G. S. WHITMORE said that at the present time there were at least two harbours in the colony that had absolutely proved to be failures, upon which a great deal of money had been expended, and on which the people had to pay rates. He was at Napier two or three days ago with many other persons, some of whom were members of Parliament, and he was sorry to say he did not think the present state of the harbour there produced a very favourable impression on any of those who were with him. He was one of those who had hoped that the harbour would be a success, and he still hoped so, though it was totally against the advice they received from Sir John Coode and others, who gave no very great promise of success at the present site. The cost had been enormous; and if there was not a large and wealthy district behind it that locality could not possibly bear the burden. He did not know about Riverton, or how

wealthy it might be; but the number of 843 inhabitants at Riverton did not seem to warrant a large expenditure on a harbour there, more especially as there was within a few miles of Riverton an admirable harbour—namely, the Bluff. For the sake of the honourable gentleman who had laboured so hard to advance this Bill in Parliament, and because nothing on earth could come out of the Bill as it was presented to them, a great number of honourable gentlemen were prepared to support the Bill. After all, this was only out of sympathy with the particular individual; but it might affect the interests of a very large district, which it might very possibly bring to ruin. It had been urged that £50,000 or £60,000 would be subscribed by the people in the neighbourhood; and that that amount, in the opinion of the promoter of the Bill, would be sufficient. But they had also in evidence that £300,000 would probably not be sufficient to carry out the work, in the interests of those 843 persons. That number did not appear to him to be such a population as to justify the making of another of these unfortunate artificial harbours. He himself had suffered a good deal in connection with the Gisborne Harbour; and the honourable member for Taranaki would know how hard the country had been hit over the New Plymouth Harbour, and the discredit and failure in connection with the New Plymouth Harbour bonds. However, happily, the Taranaki people were recovering from the difficulties in which they were plunged. In Taranaki certainly there was some excuse for harbour-works, because that was the only harbour between Manukau and Wellington. On the other hand, as to Riverton, there was a natural harbour at the Bluff, and that was a very good reason why they should wait. He was a good deal inclined to vote against this Bill; but, as it did not mean anything at present, or until a further Bill was brought forward to give practical effect to the proposals, he thought they might allow their sympathies to carry them so far, and they might vote for the second reading on this occasion, as the Bill was only a machinery measure, and indicated the desire that some people should come forward to provide the money to build a breakwater at Riverton. He was not sure that it was a right thing to encourage the making of harbours, seeing the number there were already at the mouths of the different rivers, except on the opinion of the very highest scientific authorities. He would not vote against this Bill, but, when another Bill of a different character came before them, then, he hoped, some better reasons would be advanced than the existence of a population of 843 persons in Riverton, with an unknown district at the back, and the wealthy oyster-bed they had been told of.

The Hon. Mr. BONAR said, while he had great sympathy with the promoter of this Bill, who believed honestly in his heart that it would be of the utmost benefit to that part of the colony, he thought the Council had had sufficient experience of harbours and Harbour

Boards to pause before moving any further in this matter. They had before them various applications from different Harbour Boards belonging to large districts which showed the difficulties there were in carrying on these harbour-works, and more particularly the difficulty there was in finding the necessary funds to pay for the cost of those works. In many cases the works had not been a success, in others there had been great difficulty in obtaining the funds that were required; and there was an unmistakable effort being made to throw the cost of those works upon the whole colony. He thought, himself, the colony should never have parted with the right to construct those works. They should have retained the right entirely in the hands of the colony. However, that was past and gone; but, at the same time, it should make us pause a little before the Council committed itself once more to the construction of a new harbour in a comparatively sparsely-populated district, whatever its future might be. If the Bill was confined to the limitations that had been stated by the mover, there might be some reason to allow it to pass. But he saw the Council was asked to do more than simply give authority to negotiate. Certain terms were laid down under which negotiations could be carried out. He said these conditions were absolutely wrong, and were a departure from the usual practice in New Zealand. What did clause 3 say?—

"The Council may, upon the passing of this Act, negotiate with any company or body of persons incorporated or thereafter to become incorporated, either in the Colony of New Zealand or the United Kingdom, and duly empowered and entitled to carry on business in New Zealand, for the construction of further harbour-works."

And then, further, it said that this body of irresponsible persons—not yet formed in the colony, or in Great Britain, or Goodness knows where!—was to take over for a term not exceeding fifty years the control of the harbour upon such terms and conditions as the Council might think fit. They were to take over the whole of the powers and authorities of the governing body of Riverton for a period of fifty years, and the whole of that body's privileges were to be transferred to a body not yet formed. The whole of the constitutional rights were to be handed over to some unknown quantity for a period of fifty years in order to maintain this harbour. The thing was utterly wrong, and it was impossible for them to legalise and sanction such a proposal, either directly or indirectly. Then he came to another point in connection with this harbour. They had been accustomed in Parliament, when a measure of this sort was brought down, to have a full statement and plan of the works to be done, estimates of the engineers showing what was proposed, and all information possible. They had been told by his honourable friend Sir George Whitmore that the cost of these works would be about £300,000. Still, he was not sure that his honourable friend Mr. Richardson would not say that it was more

Hon. Sir G. S. Whitmore

likely to cost £500,000; and from the little acquaintance he had had of the district, and from the nature of the works to be carried out, he should think it would cost a good deal more. He understood there was to be a mole thrown out to contend against the whole force of the ocean in a very exposed part of the country. He would refer to the case of the Napier works, which were of a very substantial character, but which had been exceedingly damaged from time to time; and yet, in connection with this harbour at Riverton, attached to a comparatively small district, they were asked to sanction a work of which they did not know the cost. They had no reports, and no plans of the work, and it was simply a vague indefinite idea. He knew the honourable gentleman introducing the Bill was making this his special mission, and had the matter honestly at heart, but he (Mr. Bonar) could not conscientiously give his vote to hand over to a non-local body of people for fifty years, and for an unknown expenditure of money on a work the plans of which he had not seen, the entire control of the district concerned.

The Hon. Mr. REYNOLDS felt somewhat in a difficulty as to how to vote on the present occasion. He was opposed to the Bill, but he found that it was carried by the other House, after a great deal of whipping-up, by a fair majority, although with the intention, he believed, of its being thrown out in the Council. He did not agree that the Council should be made a cat's-paw of, and the responsibility thrown on them of dealing with a measure which some people might consider was of very great importance to them. He knew Riverton pretty well: he was down there as a member of the Government and Minister of Marine some years ago to investigate and report on the harbour. He was accompanied on that occasion by the Engineer-in-Chief, by the late Mr. Seed, head of the Customs Department, and by the late Captain Johnson. It was generally admitted by all of them that it was impossible for a harbour to be constructed at Riverton, excepting at an unwarrantable cost. Since then, surveys had been made and a report furnished upon it by a qualified marine engineer. That engineer had told him that a first-rate harbour could be constructed there. The only drawback was one of expense. Plans and specifications had been submitted, and he believed the cost was £340,000, or thereabouts. The question now was, whether Parliament was justified in passing a Bill involving such a large expenditure, and whether the trade of the district would really warrant that expenditure. Of course, it might be said that other parts of the colony had harbours, and that their prospects at the time they were sanctioned were not greater than those of Riverton. There was no doubt that there was a large extent of good back-country, but that back-country was not in full cultivation. He doubted whether anything like that expenditure would be warranted by the district. There were other harbours—New Plymouth, for example, which had been especially favoured by the Government of the

day—he did not mean the present Government. It had been provided with very large endowments of lands which belonged to the colony—part of the confiscated lands intended to recoup the three million pounds war loan of 1863; but this fact would not justify an even larger expenditure for Riverton.

Debate adjourned.

The Council adjourned at five minutes to five o'clock p.m.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.

Wednesday, 5th September, 1894.

Second Reading—Government Advertising—Westport Cardiff Coal Company—Audit of Local Bodies' Accounts—Agricultural Department Leaflets—South Canterbury Schools—Education Endowments—Federation—Government Printing Office—County Council Valuations—University Scholarships for Maoris—Foundation of the Colony—Lake Forsyth Drainage Bill—Ngāere and other Blocks Native Claims Adjustment Bill—Kikiri Native School Site Bill—Rating on Unimproved Value Bill—Adulteration Prevention Bill—Designation of Districts (No. 2) Bill.

Mr. SPEAKER took the chair at half-past two o'clock.

PRAYERS.

SECOND READING.

Public Works Bill (No. 2).

GOVERNMENT ADVERTISING.

On the motion of Sir R. STOUT, it was ordered, That a return be laid before this House giving copies of all circulars or instructions sent to all Government officers regarding the insertion of advertisements in newspapers in the colony.

WESTPORT CARDIFF COAL COMPANY.

Mr. G. W. RUSSELL brought up a further report of the Railways Committee on the petition of the Westport Cardiff Coal Company, recommending that the correspondence, minutes of proceedings, and evidence be printed; and moved, That the report be laid on the table, and be referred to the Government.

Mr. SEDDON desired to say that, as the report had been laid on the table, and a large number of men, some fifty or sixty, with families dependent upon them, had been kept out of employment—because the two companies, the Mokihinui and the Westport Cardiff Company, were affected—he thought the matter should be treated as one of urgency. It was therefore the intention of the Government to send a copy of the report to the Railway Commissioners. He did not know that there was any other way that they could know what had transpired. Simply to take the report and lay it on the table, and let it remain there, would appear to him to be no good, either in the way of giving relief to the petitioners, or of dealing with the subject as was intended by the House and the Committee.

Sir R. STOUT wished to say, as a member of the Committee, that he was entirely opposed to the report being agreed to, and he thought it quite unfair that the report of the Committee should go to the Railway Commissioners with any *imprimatur*, so to speak, from the House. The Ministry, of course, could send any report they liked, but, until the matter had been discussed and settled by the House, he submitted that the Railway Commissioners had no right to take an opinion from the House.

Mr. J. McKENZIE moved, as an amendment, That this report and the previous report be printed.

Mr. CROWTHER wished to say, in answer to what the Premier had stated, that the Committee had no knowledge of any obstruction or hindrance having existed respecting the Mokihinui Company. As far as he had been able to obtain any knowledge, that company had been working continuously; their rights had never been interfered with. As to printing the report, he was unable to see how it could very well be done, seeing there had been no shorthand reporter there to take notes. It seemed to him, therefore, that there must be more or less some amount of guesswork about it. He had no objection to the report being printed, but, at the same time, he was sorry to notice the amount of importance that had been attached to this business. He regretted that this had been singled out specially for discussion by the House.

Mr. EARNSHAW said the statement that the Premier had just made was hardly in accordance with fact. It was incorrect to say that fifty or sixty men had been kept out of work. As far as his memory served him as a member of the Railways Committee, the evidence distinctly proved that the Cardiff Company could have carried on their work. There was undoubtedly evidence that that might have been done; so that if there had been any delay of work in connection with the Cardiff Company carrying on their operations it had been entirely on their own responsibility. The Premier said he proposed to forward this report to the Railway Commissioners. He (Mr. Earnshaw) hoped the Railway Commissioners would not hastily act upon that report until the whole of the evidence was before them. He thought the evidence given before the Committee, and the action of the Committee, were very significant. The minutes of the Committee would speak for themselves.

Mr. DUNCAN said the last speaker had not dealt very fairly with this matter. He would like honourable members to show both sides of the case, and not try to give the question any particular colour when it came before the House. It was very annoying to be on a Committee, and have the whole of the facts of a case submitted to them, and then to have only one side of the question mentioned to the House. The honourable member for Auckland City (Mr. Crowther) complained that no shorthand-writer was present during one sitting of the Committee. He might mention, however, that a shorthand-writer attended, and took all

the evidence. A reporter might not have been present when the Committee was drawing up its report.

An Hon. MEMBER.—That was the most important day of all.

Mr. DUNCAN said it might be so to some people, because some persons attached very great importance to trifles when those trifles happened to suit their own ends. Honourable members therefore need not take much notice of that statement. The Committee had been trying from the commencement to get this matter settled in the fairest way they could. The Committee had asked leave of the House to sit during the sitting of the House, so as to forward this business, and get the men to work, and to enable the coal-mining operations to be proceeded with, so as to break down the monopoly which at present existed, and to enable the people in the towns to get cheap coal.

Mr. CROWTHER said what he said was he was sorry that the trouble had arisen out of the finding of this Committee. He further said no reporter was present, and he said so again. There was no reporter present at the finding of this Committee. It would be a question in the writing-up of the report whether it was correct or not, in consequence of no reporter being there.

Mr. DUNCAN said there was never any reporter present at the finding of a Committee—when the Committee was considering its report.

Mr. TANNER said the honourable member for Auckland City (Mr. Crowther) objected to the proceedings of the Committee because no shorthand-writer was present to report the proceedings during the last sitting of the Committee. It was utterly unnecessary for a shorthand-writer to be present then, so long as the minutes of the Committee, which were kept by the clerk, were given; and it was with that view—for the purpose of giving the fullest publicity to the proceedings of the Committee—that he had moved—and he was glad to say it had been carried at the last meeting of the Committee—that the minutes be also published along with the evidence, which he believed was already in print.

Mr. G. HUTCHISON said it was very desirable that the amendment of the Minister of Lands should be accepted, and the whole of the papers printed. There had been so many sinister reports as to the proceedings in connection with this petition that it was desirable the House should have the fullest information upon the subject. But there should be a clear understanding that, until the House had had an opportunity of perusing both reports and coming to a conclusion in the matter, nothing should be done by the Premier which in the interval would be binding on the House. The Premier might do anything on his own motion, but not as representing the House, or as committing the House to any decision.

Mr. SEDDON was very glad the honourable member had told the House what had been said outside the House.

Mr. G. HUTCHISON.—I did not do so.

Mr. SEDDON said the honourable gentleman had said quite enough to indicate what he meant.

Mr. G. HUTCHISON.—The cap fits.

Mr. SEDDON said the cap did not fit; a cap of that kind would fit the honourable gentleman's own head much better than his. It had been stated in reference to this matter that the Premier had a thousand shares in the New Cardiff Company.

An Hon. MEMBER.—Who stated so?

Mr. SEDDON said the slander was circulated in the lobbies, and a gentleman holding a high position in Wellington had told him that the rumour was current in the town, and not one member, but a score of members, had been told the same thing. If it came to that, that when a report was not in favour of a company those connected with it should descend to such means to support their case, all he could say was that their case was very rotten. He had not now, and never had, a share in a coal-mine company in New Zealand; neither directly nor indirectly was he interested in any coal-mine, nor was any one belonging to him interested in a coal-mine.

An Hon. MEMBER.—Or venture?

Mr. SEDDON.—Or venture. And it would scarcely have been necessary for him to refute the vile calumny had it not been for the remarks made by the honourable member for Patea and the honourable member for Dunedin City (Mr. Earnshaw). The honourable member for Dunedin City said that the action taken in connection with this matter was very significant. He would ask both sides of the House to consider this: One company had had the land for twelve years, and had not put out, he supposed, more than 1,000 tons of coal.

Sir R. STOUT asked if it was competent to argue on the report itself on the mere motion for the printing.

Mr. SPEAKER said that had been allowed by previous Speakers.

Mr. SEDDON said the land held by this company was very valuable Crown land, and large sums of money had been spent by the Crown in respect to it. The Crown had constructed a railway there, and had spent nearly half a million on harbour-works. The same applied to the Mokihinui Company: it had held its lease for many years, and had put out very little coal. Both companies had had notice that their leases would be determined unless they put out coal. The whole thing was locked up again, and the men in both mines had stopped working. One company had placed their property, he believed, in the market, and the other company could not go on unless the rates for carrying the coal over the Mokihinui Company's line were reasonable. They could not enter into any contracts, and to attempt to do so at present would be very bad business. The House, knowing the urgency of the matter, had granted leave to the Committee to sit during the sitting of the House. That being the case, why should there be any further delay? The only conclusion he could come to was that there was a minority of the Committee

which was endeavouring to thwart effect being given to the decision of the majority. Under these circumstances it was well that the House and the country should know what the Committee had done, by the printing of the reports. He had stated that he intended to take action upon this matter; and the reason he intended to take action was this: The whole matter was left to him under the Act as Minister for Public Works; but the Mokihinui Company, not having the rolling-stock and locomotive to draw the coal and thus carry out their part of the law, were very anxious that the Government should agree to allow them to vest the railway in the Railway Commissioners, so that the Commissioners might do the haulage. The Governor was advised by the Ministry to agree that that should be done. That was some time ago, and the matter was no further advanced. The question was, How much longer was this deadlock to remain? He had said—and the statement had been challenged—that nothing had been done, and that they were stopped at the Mokihinui Company's mine. He would say they were stopped there and were not putting out any coal, and, until the matter was settled between the companies, nothing further would be done. And now it came to this: that the wives and families of these hard-working men were absolutely reduced so much in circumstances that subscription-lists had been sent round so that bread might be procured for the sufferers. Surely this in itself was a good ground for urging that something should be done at once, for, if not, these poor people would be reduced almost to starvation. Then, as they were being kept in this position week after week and month after month, there was sufficient groundwork for having the matter dealt with at once. It demanded the intervention of a strong hand to settle the matter, so that both companies should carry out the law. This was public property, these coal-mines being leased from the Crown; and there were certain conditions imposed as to output that neither the one company nor the other had complied with; and it was preferable to determine the whole of the leases, on the ground that the output conditions had not been complied with, rather than to allow the matter to remain in the position in which it stood at present. All he said was that it was necessary to send on the report to the Railway Commissioners; and in this connection he might say it could not be denied that the Committee was unanimous.

An Hon. MEMBER.—No.

Mr. SEDDON said at any rate it was almost unanimous in fixing the capital value at £10,000. With regard to this £10,000, he believed this was a disputed matter in Committee, but the dispute was only as to a difference of £2,000 as regarded the capital value. That was all the dispute there was as between the two parties on the Committee; and, that being the case, he would ask, under these circumstances, whether it was right to aid in the delay, and keep it going, when that was really all the matter in dispute. But what

he had held right through the piece, and what he held now, was this: You must take the capital value to-day, not what the line cost to construct. That was the only matter in dispute between the two parties in the Committee. Otherwise, he believed, with regard to the £10,000, the Committee would be almost unanimous. He thought in one case it was £10,000 capital value, with 6 per cent. on that, and in the other case it was £8,000, with 7 per cent. He thought the House would now understand, so far as the Committee was concerned, what the true position was. The dispute, therefore, being so trifling, to act so as to still keep these men out of employment, when their wives and children were almost on the verge of starvation, was a thing they should not allow. He did not know why the senior member for Wellington City laughed when he made this statement. It was as he stated. The Government had information on the subject, and the member for the district would tell them it was so; and they had actually to find these men casual work to prevent this sort of thing going on. Honourable members might not think much of it; but there was the condition of the men, and the condition of their wives and children, and if that was not sufficient justification for asking the House to deal with the matter at once he could not use a stronger argument. His only reason for the course he was now taking was that the position of these men and their wives and children was such that he considered they should take immediate steps to end this dispute. He believed, as between the two parties to the dispute, that one party could not carry out the law because they had not the necessary capital. That was the Mokihinui Company. The Cardiff Company, before depositing the £2,000, and before they acquired the lease, asked the Government whether there would be a reduction of the charges fixed two years ago by the Railway Commissioners. Before they raised the capital they had the assurance of the Government that this would be the case. All the Government was desirous of seeing was that a reasonable charge should be fixed—that the capital value should be the selling-value to-day, and not what was put down as the cost of the railway. These were points which should weigh with honourable members; and when the report and the evidence were printed, and the original report was printed, he thought the large majority of the House would come to the conclusion that it was the proper course to adopt, and that the decision of the Committee was fair and reasonable.

Mr. EARNSHAW wished to make a personal explanation. When he used the word "significant" he knew nothing about what the honourable gentleman stated with regard to certain charges in the matter. He was referring to the action of the Committee, which was alluded to by the Premier.

Sir R. STOUT said the position was certainly the most extraordinary one he had ever known in Parliament. Let them see what was the position. The position was this: A report was

Mr. Seddon

brought down from the Committee on Saturday morning. That report was brought before the House contrary to the orders of the House, and, having been brought into the House contrary to the orders of the House, it was laid on the table of the House, he believed, contrary to the orders of the House. What happened after this? The report was not sent to the Government for consideration. The usual course adopted was that the House was given an opportunity of discussing the report. But next came down this Committee with the evidence it had taken and its minutes, and it asked that these should be printed. Before the House had even seen the evidence, it was to be printed; and before the House had had an opportunity of considering the report the Premier got up and said the Government would take the matter into its own hands, and would not allow the House an opportunity of discussing it at all. That was certainly a most extraordinary position. If the matter was to be discussed by the House it could be discussed as a matter of urgency. If the Premier gave notice to move, "That this House approves of the report," the question could be brought on as urgent business, and could be discussed as a matter of urgency; but to say that, owing to these men being out of work, it was a matter of urgency was all "buncombe." The Government, at any rate, should have the matter brought up and discussed by the House. What did the Premier do now? He was taking the thing into his own hands, and was not allowing the House to express an opinion at all. It was said this was being done because thirty or fifty men were out of employment. Let him (Sir R. Stout) tell the House exactly how the matter stood. The Railway Commissioners fixed this rate for one year only, and not for all time.

An Hon. MEMBER.—They had not the power to fix it for more than one year.

Sir R. STOUT thanked the honourable member for reminding him of that. They said, "There would not be less than 10,000 tons got out in twelve months." There could not be if even thirty or fifty men were employed. What, then, was the difference between the two rates that kept these thirty men out of work? The amount that the Commissioners fixed for the Cardiff Company to pay would have been £525 for the use of the line for a year, while now they were to pay £280. That made a difference of £245 as between the two rates. Could any man who had listened to the evidence come to the conclusion that it was the difference between these two amounts which stopped this coal company from working its own mine? This was sufficient to dispose of the question that this dispute was keeping the men out of employment. It simply showed that the Cardiff Company was to get concessions from the Government which they had no right to get.

Mr. R. MCKENZIE.—You are entirely astray.

Sir R. STOUT.—If that was so, and if the honourable member had got information on

these things, why did he not give evidence before the Committee, and not take either side merely because his constituents were interested?

Mr. R. McKENZIE rose to a point of order. The honourable gentleman was accusing him of taking a side.

Mr. SPEAKER said there had not been any breach of order committed, and consequently there was no need for the Speaker's interposition.

Sir R. STOUT said that what he accused the honourable member of was of not taking any side. He did not blame him for that, and he hoped the honourable gentleman would not interrupt him now. What, then, was the position? This line which the Mokihinui Company had made, and which was used by the Westport Cardiff Company, consisted of 1 mile 67 chains; and the Committee, on the motion of the Premier, had fixed the cost of this line at £8,000. There had been no distance of 1 mile 67 chains formed in any part of the West Coast for that money, and he asked the honourable gentleman to name any line that had been formed for that money. They had returns of what the line cost. It had been fixed at only £8,000, but the Railway Commissioners fixed it at £15,000, and he believed it had cost every penny of that. It might be true that the railway could be constructed now for less; but, as he pointed out, the cost had been fixed at £8,000, and yet it could not have been constructed for £8,000 at the time it was constructed. Now, the Mokihinui Company were asked to do—what? They had constructed the line, and their line ought not to be used without allowing them a fair sum for its use. What excuse was there for that? There were thirty men out of employment, and it was said this was on account of a mere difference of £245 for the use of the line for a whole year, on the estimate of 10,000 tons a year.

An Hon. MEMBER said there were more than thirty men out of employment.

Sir R. STOUT said there might be fifty out of employment, but the keeping of them out of employment was a convenient lever which was being used by the Cardiff Company to force a concession which they were not entitled to. He submitted that the Railway Commissioners, as parliamentary officers—if they really stood in that position—although they had only been appointed for a few months, had no right to accept any dictation from the Government; else there was no need for having Railway Commissioners at all. He submitted it was an entirely unwarranted action for the Premier to step in without giving the House an opportunity of discussing the report, or allowing them to see the evidence on which the report was based—practically saying, "I do not care what the House says: I shall send this matter to the Railway Commissioners." What did that mean? It was tantamount to saying to the Railway Commissioners, "As you have only been appointed for a few months, if you do not obey my behests you know what will happen at the end of your term." He

said this sort of management of the railways was simply most monstrous.

Mr. R. McKENZIE said it was a somewhat remarkable speech they had heard from the honourable member, and it was somewhat amusing to him (Mr. R. McKenzie). He knew all about this dispute, because it occurred in his own district. He knew it, in fact, much better than the honourable gentleman. It had been going on for some months. This matter did not start within the last few weeks; it had been hanging on for some time now. The honourable gentleman said there were some twenty or thirty men out of employment.

Sir R. STOUT.—From thirty to fifty.

Mr. R. McKENZIE said the honourable gentleman could make it thirty or fifty, just as he liked, but, as a matter of fact, there was a population of four or five hundred who had been on the verge of starvation for several months past through this dispute. He had had petitions sent him: in fact, he came up to Wellington a week before the session started, with the view of endeavouring to persuade the Railway Commissioners, if he could, to try to have this unfortunate dispute settled, so that the people could get the opportunity of making a living. When the honourable gentleman told them that only from thirty to fifty men were out of employment he simply showed that he knew nothing of the position. On the other hand, he believed the honourable gentleman accused him of having taken a side.

Sir R. STOUT.—No, I did not.

Mr. R. McKENZIE said, as a matter of fact he took no side. He refused to present the petition of the Westport Cardiff Company to that House, so that he should not take any side. The only interest he had in the matter was the interest of the public. It was now some six weeks since that petition was presented. He got letters and telegrams every day urging him to get the matter settled. There had been no opportunity of settling it. The question had been before the Committee for six weeks. He attended that Committee, and listened to most of the evidence, and had got opinions of his own as to the lines on which a just and impartial settlement could be arrived at. He did not wish to put these opinions into *Hansard*. As representing the district he wished to take a side with neither party. He listened to the speech of the honourable member for Wellington City, who was biased on this question, and no doubt was working for one company against the other.

Sir R. STOUT.—No, I am not.

Mr. R. McKENZIE said that was his opinion. Of course, the honourable gentleman denied it, and he was prepared to take his word for it. Having noticed his action in the House and on the Committee, he could only come to one conclusion. He did not know whether this matter was going to be settled now, or when, but he could assure the House it was a most important question for the district. It was a most unfortunate thing for the men in the district that this dispute ever started. He did all he possibly could to get it

settled, but it had got beyond him altogether. Now, there was the question of the value of the line. He gave evidence before the Committee on the value of the line. Mr. Wilson, Government Resident Engineer in Wellington, gave evidence. Mr. Wilson knew that piece of railway as well as he (Mr. McKenzie) knew the lobbies of that House, and he gave evidence as to the value of that line. The company objected to this valuation. Mr. Broome, engineer for the Cardiff Coal Company, gave the highest estimate. He (Mr. McKenzie) had been connected with the construction of railways ever since railway construction was commenced in New Zealand. He was satisfied the amount allowed for that 1 mile 68 chains—£8,000—was not an excessive value. He did not say so in giving evidence before the Committee. He said before the Committee that Mr. Wilson's estimate was a liberal one. He was prepared, as an old contractor, to say that £8,000 was a very liberal estimate indeed. There was nothing in the contention of the honourable member for Wellington City—that this line was worth £16,000 or £18,000. He was quite aware that the Railway Commissioners took the valuation of the company, which made the line at £16,000. As a matter of fact, out of that £16,000 there was £10,000 spent on a wharf and in blasting rocks out of the river-bed. That should be taken into consideration. In fact, the £10,000 was money the company ought to have written off their books long ago. That was not put before the Railway Commissioners. The Railway Commissioners themselves, when he was trying to put this matter before them and get the thing settled without coming to that House at all, admitted they made a mistake in this valuation of £16,000. They never heard of this wharf at all, or of the amount of money spent on it and the river-bed. He could, if he liked, produce evidence to show that the company's own manager said there was at least £10,000 wasted—totally thrown away on this railway. The honourable member for Wellington City was an authority on most things, and wanted to be an authority on railways; but he did not think the honourable gentleman was much of an authority on this particular matter. As a matter of fact, in railway construction through bush-country bushfelling was one of the most expensive items. The bush was felled 3 chains wide and was cleared to a distance of 1 chain on all Government railways: on this particular line there was no bush felled outside the cuttings or embankments. He hoped this matter would get settled without any further delay. It had been hanging on for nine months, and four or five hundred people were on the verge of starvation on account of it. A subscription-list had to be sent round to prevent them from starving. This was never known before on the West Coast, and he was sorry such a thing should ever happen on the West Coast, and he hoped it never would happen again. That was the reason why he interested himself to get the dispute settled, and he hoped there would be no further delay over the matter.

Mr. BELL said that, after hearing what the

Mr. R. McKenzie

Premier and the honourable member for the Buller had said, one would suppose that the Mokihinui Company was preventing these men from earning their living. There was an agreement between the Railway Commissioners and the Mokihinui Company, and it was the action of the Westport Cardiff Company against that agreement, and their refusal to comply with its terms, which was causing this trouble. It was all very well to say that the Committee was to settle the dispute. That House had before constituted a tribunal which was to settle this matter, and that tribunal was the Railway Commissioners. It was a parliamentary commission having the powers which the House had delegated by the Government Railways Act. If a Committee of that House differed from the Commissioners in the decision they had come to, the Committee of that House, no doubt, could ask the House to pass an Act to remedy the matter, but the Committee had no real duties or powers; and in his opinion it was not any act of the Mokihinui Company which was causing all this, but the appeal of the Westport Cardiff Company against the terms of agreement made by the Commissioners. *Prima facie* the terms which the Commissioners had approved would be fair and just. It was a Board of Commissioners appointed by the honourable gentleman himself. It was not likely they would do an unwise, unjust, and improper thing. What was it the Commissioners took into consideration, and what was it the Committee refused to accept? This was the position: Quite irrespective of the cost of this line, the Commissioners said the Mokihinui Company had invested their capital. All the capital they had put into that line they must lose in thirty-three years, because the lease terminated in thirty-three years, and their possession of the railway with it.

Mr. GUINNESS.—Oh! no.

Mr. BELL said the Commissioners said so, and he believed the Commissioners were right,—that the railway would go with the lease in thirty-three years.

Mr. SEDDON.—No, certainly not.

Mr. BELL said the honourable gentleman said "Certainly not"; but he did not quite agree with him. However, the Commissioners took that into consideration.

Mr. GUINNESS.—Erroneously.

Mr. BELL said they further took into consideration that the Mokihinui Company took the whole risk. If a fault was met with in the mine the Mokihinui Company would lose all their capital, the Westport Cardiff Company nothing. The Railway Commissioners took that into consideration; also the question of the expense which the Mokihinui Company would be put to in the repair of the line, which, according to their statement, was specially subject to slips. The Committee now reported that they considered interest upon £8,000, and no more, would be a sufficient remuneration for the Mokihinui Company. He did not want now to discuss that question at all.

Mr. TANNER.—There is half the cost of maintenance, in addition.

Mr. BELL said that was so—half the cost of maintenance, in addition. He did not want to discuss that matter, because the Committee might be right or the Commissioners might be right in the view they had taken. What he wished to point out was that the Commissioners came to a conclusion upon a basis different from that taken by the Committee. The Commissioners were a far more reliable body to determine a matter of that kind than any Committee of that House could be.

Mr. G. W. RUSSELL.—They did not determine it; they assumed the correctness of the Mokihinui Company's statement.

Mr. BELL said they did go into the value, and they subsequently had all these matters which had been referred to brought before them.

Mr. DUNCAN.—They stated themselves they did not.

Mr. BELL said the honourable member had better refer to the papers and he would find he was not correctly stating the facts. What he (Mr. Bell) said was this: that, whether the Committee or the Commissioners were right, he did not think he was competent to discuss that matter, and, with all due respect to the Committee, they were not competent to discuss it. The body really competent to determine the matter were the Commissioners, who held authority from Parliament; and, when the Commissioners came to a conclusion, then, when a Committee of that House disagreed with them, for the Premier to say it was that House or the Commissioners who were causing a delay in work was to mislead that House.

Mr. CROWTHER said there was only 1d. a ton difference, and that would amount to about £25 a year.

Mr. BELL said the question of what money the company had sunk in this concern was, the Committee said, not to be taken as the basis of the computation of what should be paid to them. He differed from the Committee. The Committee's opinion might be better than his, but the arbiter must necessarily be an expert, and not a non-expert body. The Chairman of the Committee might probably think that he was competent to decide it by himself. But the Chairman was not an expert any more than he himself was. He was only able to take facts and form conclusions from them.

3.30. He considered that the honourable gentleman was not competent to determine what was a fair amount to pay for the railway. It did not follow, because a gentleman was a member of that House, that he was competent to form an opinion on a subject of the kind. He did not desire to enter into a discussion of the details of the matter in dispute, but he dissented from the report of the Committee as to the position of the Railway Commissioners.

Mr. WILSON was glad that he had the chance of speaking on this question. He understood

that early on Saturday morning the Chairman of this Committee came down to the House with a report, and, when the honourable member for Eden objected to the report coming up, he then stated that members on this side of the House never attended any meeting while the evidence had been taken, but came in only when the report was being considered. Now, he had attended every meeting of the Committee at which this question had come up, because he felt that it was a matter of consequence. It had been stated that he had walked out of the room with others when they found they could not get their way; and the reason he had done so was this: A draft report was brought up by the honourable member for Oamaru, which was exactly on the same lines as the proposal the Cardiff Coal Company had made to the Mokihinui Company. He felt satisfied that the line was worth more than the capital value of £10,000, and he had voted with Mr. Earnshaw when he moved that £12,000 be the capital value. However, seeing that a majority was against them, he was quite prepared to accept the report that had been brought down. At that moment the Premier came into the room, and, without having heard any of the arguments, simply disagreed entirely with the report, and said that the value of the line was not as entered in the report. The action of the Premier reminded him of the huckster who went about trying to beat down other people in order to get a bargain; and he felt satisfied that the Premier intended to buy the line, and that he was trying to reduce the capital value for the express purpose of improving the bargain he was endeavouring to make. Such had been his feeling of astonishment at the Premier's action that he walked out of the room.

Mr. SEDDON said it might be information to the honourable member to know that the Government had confidential information that the coal-mine and railway could be bought at £15,000.

Mr. WILSON might remark that he had never heard it mentioned that the Premier had any shares in this company. That was not in his mind when he walked out of the room.

Mr. SEDDON said he had no shares in it.

Mr. WILSON had never said so; and he had not even heard the rumour. The Cardiff Coal Company made an offer, and stated that they placed the capital value at £10,000; and now the Committee was going to reduce it to £8,000. A great deal had been said about the value of the line, and they had gone a great deal upon Mr. Wilson's value of it. Mr. Wilson might be a very good man, and he had no reason to doubt that he was a very good engineer. He made a fair valuation, and put it down at £5,000 a mile. There was a length of 1 mile 68 chains, and, computing the value at £5,000 a mile, the capital value would be £9,250. He understood that the Premier agreed with that; and yet he now stated that the capital value was only £8,000. In view of the Premier's action regarding the report of the Committee, he

thought that his (Mr. Wilson's) action in walking out of the room was justified.

Mr. G. W. RUSSELL said it was a second-hand line, and the estimate given would be the prime cost.

Mr. WILSON said that was a different point. If the line were made now it would not be made for less than £10,000.

Mr. SEDDON said the rails and sleepers were ten years old.

Mr. WILSON said the valuation of the engineer placed a considerably higher value on the line than the Premier was inclined to think. The honourable member for the Buller had told them that this dispute had been going on for eight or nine months; and yet he stated that the fact of its being kept back a few days would injure the people concerned; and the honourable member for the Grey, who had charge of the petition, knowing very well the sympathy of the House was open to the unemployed, had said the men were being kept out of employment by the dispute, in order to gain his end; but the House had evidence showing that only twenty-five people were employed at the mine; and he was sure, if that district could only claim that number of unemployed, then it was very lucky indeed. He thought he had shown that the value of the line was certainly more than £8,000, which was the crucial point of the whole question.

Mr. G. W. RUSSELL proposed to accept the amendment, but as a great deal had been said in connection with the matter he would like to make a few remarks. One question put to the engineer, Mr. Wilson, had been as follows: "Taking into consideration the position of the mine, what do you think would be a fair cost of the railway?" He replied, "£5,000 a mile." He would like to point out that, in speaking of an exactly similar class of railway—the line from Ngakawau to Mokihi-nui—Mr. Wilson had stated that the cost of that line was about £4,200 per mile. At the time this dispute occurred, as had been already pointed out, the Commissioners had actually declined to allow their stock to be run over the line, and that showed very clearly that the line, as he had indicated, was in a second-hand condition, and the value of it, therefore, should not be based upon the estimate of what the line would be worth if it were new. He would like to draw attention to clause 7 of the petition presented by the Westport Cardiff Coal Company. That clause read, "That, relying upon this assurance, your petitioners have opened their mine, completed their works, filled their bins, and have been ready to send coal to the market for upwards of two months." Therefore the position had been that the Cardiff Company had been prevented for three or four months from carrying on their business over the line, and the whole of the winter's trade had been lost. The Mokihi-nui Company were willing to carry their coal at a price to be afterwards fixed, but it was quite clear that this company could not enter into contracts unless they had exact knowledge of what the cost would be. With regard to the attitude of the Commis-

Mr. Wilson

sioners, he would like to point out that the Chief Commissioner, in reply to a question as to whether the value was fixed upon a fair basis or not, said, "Under these circumstances, the Commissioners assumed that if, say, £15,000 were taken as the capital cost of the line, the interest on that amount at 7 per cent.—the rate the Mokihi-nui Company is paying on their debentures—the annual interest on capital would be £1,050, or £525 for each company on 10,000 tons, the minimum annual output in terms of the Cardiff Company's lease. The interest would thus be nearly 1s. 1d. a ton."

Mr. BELL.—You have not read the circumstances to which they were referring.

Mr. G. W. RUSSELL did not know how far back the honourable member wished him to go in order to settle the case; but he was dealing with the question of how the Commissioners fixed the value. The following was the evidence given by the Chief Commissioner:—

"Mr. JAMES MCKERROW, Chairman Railway Commissioners, examined.

"Mr. Guinness.] Can you tell me whether there has been forwarded the memorandum received from the Mokihi-nui Company showing the cost of the railway?—It is among the private documents now before the Committee. The letter is No. 64, and gives the amount of the cost of the line.

"When the Commissioners received this statement did they in any way submit it to any one for verification?—No.

"Did you call the evidence of experts or others to value this line of 1 mile 22 chains?—No.

"You accepted the statement of the Mokihi-nui Company that it had cost the amount they stated?—Yes."

In the face of that statement he did not think that any honourable member, no matter what his brief might be, could say that the Commissioners did verify the statement of the Mokihi-nui Company. He would refer generally to the position of the dispute between these two companies. The Mokihi-nui Company had originally taken up coal-leases, and laid a line of railway from the coal-mine to the mouth of the Mokihi-nui River. The line originally was isolated, and the railway was intended to bring the coal down to the port from the mine; but he understood that the only vessel which ever attempted to enter the river was wrecked, and consequently the company were left without any means of getting their coal out. The House two years ago passed an Act by which the sum of £36,000 of Westport Harbour Board money was employed for the purpose of extending the Government railway from Ngakawau to Mokihi-nui, and as soon as that extension was made the Mokihi-nui Company obtained a connection with the Westport line. It was therefore evident that it was the extension of that line by an expenditure of £36,000 that gave the Mokihi-nui Company's railway a value it never possessed before, because it gave it connection with the port of shipment for the district.

An Hon. MEMBER.—It gave the Cardiff Company the same.

Mr. G. W. RUSSELL.—The Cardiff Company was not then in existence. Now he came to the further point, that the Cardiff Company and the Mokihinui Company were jointly responsible for interest up to 5 per cent. on that £36,000. Therefore the position in connection with the matter stood in this way: that the Cardiff Company, unless they got a fair way-leave for bringing coal out, would be prevented from shipping their coal, and at the same time would be penalised for not having traffic that would pay interest on the railway to the Westport Harbour Board. That he believed to be the position. In fact, they had before them evidence of the fact that the Cardiff Company had actually had a demand made upon them for £459 for the difference between interest at 5 per cent. on the £36,000 payable to the Westport Harbour Board and the earnings of the line for the last year. Now, what had been the action of the Commissioners? It would hardly be believed by honourable members that when the Commissioners fixed the rate the Cardiff Company should pay they actually laid it down that they should pay a toll of 1s. 1d. per ton for the use of a mile and three-quarters of railway. There was no haulage, for they had to pay the haulage independently altogether. It was not included in that payment of 1s. 1d., which was simply a toll for going over the Mokihinui Company's line. The Cardiff Company were asked to pay 3d. per ton for haulage from their bins to the siding at Mokihinui. The position, therefore, was this: that it was quite impossible for any company, if it was going to be taxed to that extent for getting on the main line, to have the slightest chance of competing with other companies. They had it in evidence before the Committee that, while at one time the Westport Coal Company was charged 9d. per ton for way-leave over about the same length of line, now the amount was about 1d. per ton; and when the Commissioners were asked why there was such a difference their answer was that a company with a large output was entitled to a small way-leave, but one with a small output had to pay a large way-leave. It simply amounted to this; that a new coal company was to be strangled in the earlier stages of its operations, when it really required some assistance. For what purpose this was done he could not say; he did not wish to make reflections on anybody, but it was quite evident the Commissioners adopted, he would not say a hostile attitude to the Cardiff Company, but a very friendly attitude to the Mokihinui Company; and that had been the position right through. He would now refer to the reflections that had been made against the Committee. The Committee had gone into the matter thoroughly, and some of those honourable gentlemen who had been loudest in their denunciations of the decision of the Committee were least frequent in their attendance at the Committee.

Mr. WILSON.—I was at every meeting.

Mr. G. W. RUSSELL admitted the honourable gentleman was; but he was the exception which proved the rule regarding the other side. Now he would come to what the honourable member for Wellington City (Sir R. Stout) had said. That honourable gentleman was entirely inconsistent in the matter. He had pointed out, first of all, that the only difference between the assessment of the Commissioners and the report of the Committee amounted to £245, and, while he ridiculed on the one hand the question of that sum having anything to do with the employment of labour in working the mine, he proceeded to say that the amount in dispute was so small that virtually there could not be any dispute at all. The position the honourable gentleman took up was this: Was it to be supposed that any coal company would be prevented from carrying on its operations because of a matter of £245? In connection with this matter he (Mr. G. W. Russell) asserted that the Cardiff Company had maintained a perfectly businesslike attitude. They went into the matter with the assurance of the Minister of Mines that they would have a fair way-leave and a fair toll; and he ventured to say, had it not been that a right of appeal which was supposed to exist to the Governor in Council could not be obtained, the House would never have heard anything about the matter, but the dispute would have been settled fairly and equitably, as he trusted it would be now. When the Cardiff Company found they were shut up to the Commissioners they, as wise men, simply said that they wanted to know what their position was, and until they had a fair way-leave for their coal they declined to go on any further; and in that matter the Committee had supported them. So far as the Committee were concerned, he believed they had gone into the matter as thoroughly as they could, and had endeavoured, as far as possible, to come to a fair decision as between the two companies. He sincerely hoped the matter would be amicably settled, and that the result would be to open both mines, and thus assist to break up the coal-monopoly. He would like to point out one other thing—that the Committee, in their report, not only said the Cardiff Coal Company ought to pay one-half the cost of maintenance, but also recommended that a reduction should be made in the haulage to both the Mokihinui and the Cardiff Company. Facts like these would show that the investigation by the Committee had been complete, fair, and impartial. He thought many of the remarks of honourable members had been such that, probably, in cool blood they would consider that they would have been much better unsaid. At any rate, so far as the members of the Committee were concerned, they were perfectly unanimous in desiring that the whole of the papers should be printed. They had nothing to screen, nothing to hide; and, as he had said, they desired that the whole of the papers should be laid before the country, so that everybody might know exactly why they had decided as they had done.

Mr. BELL said the honourable gentleman had referred to him as holding a brief.

Mr. G. W. RUSSELL said he had not referred to the honourable gentleman.

Mr. BELL said he accepted that statement at once. The honourable gentleman had referred to "the honourable member for Wellington City." He thought the honourable gentleman referred to him, but it appeared that he referred to the honourable the senior member for Wellington City.

Amendment agreed to, and motion, as amended, agreed to.

AUDIT OF LOCAL BODIES' ACCOUNTS.

4.0. Mr. MONTGOMERY asked the Colonial Treasurer, If he will make arrangements for sufficient auditors to audit the accounts of local bodies at the dates provided by law for making up their accounts? He had had representations made to him by the Chairman of the Akaroa County Council that they had considerable trouble in getting their accounts audited up to date. He had also been told that the same difficulty existed in other districts. The Act said that the accounts should be sent in and audited within fifteen days; but the custom was for the Auditor to come round and audit the accounts, and, owing to there being an insufficient number of Auditors, the accounts were very often audited very late, to the great inconvenience of the County Council and of its treasurer, who often had to make a number of appointments before he could get the Auditor to attend. He believed this was specially the case in the Akaroa district, where the roads were bad, and where, he was told, the Auditor was very much overworked.

Mr. WARD said the Auditor-General reported on this matter as follows:—

"There are eight Audit Inspectors. Each audits the accounts of all the local bodies in his district, the largest and principal ones first. As a rule, all are done within the six months after the account is ready. The account is revised at head-quarters before being certified. They could not be done more quickly except by employing more Inspectors at a much greater expense. I do not think that so long as the audit is in the hands of the Audit Office it can be done more effectively or cheaply than at present. If done by local auditors on the spot it could be done quicker, no doubt; but my experience of the way in which it was done was that it was both dearer and frequently very imperfect. It is well worth the delay to get it well done."

He would bring the honourable gentleman's request before the Controller, and would point out that the honourable gentleman said that according to the Act the auditing should be done within fifteen days. There was a discrepancy between the honourable member's statement and that of the Auditor-General. He would communicate with the Auditor-General, and let the honourable gentleman know the result.

AGRICULTURAL DEPARTMENT LEAFLETS.

Mr. MONTGOMERY asked the Minister of Lands, If he will have the leaflets issued by the Agricultural Department bound in a volume and sent to all local bodies, Justices of the Peace, and agricultural societies in the colony?

Mr. J. MCKENZIE said that at the present time these leaflets were sent to agricultural and pastoral societies, horticultural societies, and farmers' clubs, *et cetera*—in fact, any one could obtain them on application. To distribute them in bound volumes would cost a very considerable sum of money, and it would be almost impossible to do it so far as the past was concerned. It was entirely for the House to consider whether they had sufficient money to devote to this purpose. His own opinion was that people should get the papers bound themselves.

SOUTH CANTERBURY SCHOOLS.

Major STEWARD asked the Minister of Education, Whether the Government will this session ask that special provision be made to enable the South Canterbury Education Board to meet the requirements for additional school-accommodation in that education district, especially in connection with the several village settlements recently established therein? As he had been for several years a member of the South Canterbury Education Board he was quite aware of the difficulty they experienced with regard to funds for the erection of new schools. Fortunately, with regard to educational matters, it was a very progressive district, so much so that they were not able to overtake the requirements of the various localities. The difficulty had been accentuated during the last two or three years owing to the establishment of village settlements in various parts of the district. Those settlements had been a success, and during last year the South Canterbury Board, in addition to the ordinary school requirements, had had applications for new schools in several settlements.

Mr. REEVES said he would be most happy to give careful consideration to the special wants of South Canterbury when they were distributing the grant, and also to the special wants of other districts.

EDUCATION ENDOWMENTS.

Mr. McGUIRE asked the Government, If it is their intention to introduce a Bill with the object of having all reserves and other endowments throughout the provincial districts of the colony which are now set aside for secondary and university education vested, and the funds administered, for primary and technical education only? He thought the bulk of the people of the colony were in favour of what he suggested should be done, and he therefore trusted the Government would agree to do what was asked.

Mr. J. MCKENZIE said at the present time there was a Bill half prepared for the purpose of dealing with the administration of these reserves, but there was no intention whatsoever

of diverting the funds from the purposes for which they were set aside.

FEDERATION.

Mr. GUINNESS asked the Premier, Whether he has received any communication from the Premier of New South Wales on the question of federation of the Australasian Colonies; and, if so, will the Government inform the House what is the nature of the communication, and give this House an early opportunity of discussing this important question? He hoped the Government would see their way to give an affirmative answer to the question, and especially at the present time, when it was most important that steps should be taken in the direction indicated in the question in order that the question of a reciprocal tariff between the different colonies might be adjusted.

Mr. SEDDON said the answer must be in the affirmative, because the paper in question had been laid on the table of the House some three weeks ago, and if the honourable member would look he would find that the paper had been laid on the table "with the leave of the House."

Mr. GUINNESS said that was not answering the latter part of the question.

Mr. SEDDON said the one answered the other. The honourable member had had the opportunity at all times of dealing with this question by moving that the matter be discussed.

Mr. GUINNESS said his question was, Would the Government give facilities to the House to discuss the matter?

Mr. SEDDON said the honourable member was aware that all sitting-days were now set aside for Government business.

GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE.

Mr. PINKERTON asked the Minister in charge of the Government Printing Office, Under what system, if any, the distribution of work amongst the compositors casually employed in that department is carried out? A very large number of compositors came to Wellington during the session, and a decision of some kind had been arrived at by which the work would be equally distributed amongst those persons who came in search of employment. It had come to his knowledge that a large number of these men had not, for some reason or other, been getting anything like the share of the work that others had been getting. At the present time there were five young men from Dunedin who had been in Wellington something like ten weeks, and who had only got about five weeks' work; while a number of men from another district had been kept on steadily for six weeks or more at a time. He did not blame the Minister; he was quite willing to admit that honourable gentleman was anxious to do justice to all who came there. Therefore whatever had been done had been done without his knowledge; but there appeared to have been wire-pulling in certain quarters.

Mr. SEDDON said the honourable member had cast a reflection on some one when he stated

there had been wire-pulling in some quarters. He thought honourable members would admit that that statement was somewhat debatable. Careful inquiries had been made, with the following result:—

"A proportionate allotment of frames was fairly made to the various districts in the colony, married men and those supporting mothers with families being first selected. After all the vacant frames had been filled, a large number of unemployed printers were in Wellington. To assist these, half-time shifts were arranged, which have been continued much longer than was at first contemplated. All the casuals have been on these shifts. Single men are now being selected for these shifts. This arrangement has greatly impeded work."

A large amount of time and anxiety had been expended by his colleague the Minister of Justice and the head of the department in trying to adjust matters and arrange things fairly for all concerned. The honourable member would admit that this was a most difficult matter—where you had more men seeking employment than there was work for, for no matter how careful the officer might be some of these men would have a grievance, and it appeared that some of these men from Dunedin had a grievance, and had not been at all behindhand in ventilating that grievance.

COUNTY COUNCIL VALUATIONS.

Mr. THOMPSON asked, Whether it is the intention of the Government to give any assistance to County Councils to pay for the next triennial valuations, provided the Land-tax Department is supplied with the necessary valuations required by that department? His reason for asking this question was that the County Councils were now being called upon to make arrangements for the next triennial valuations, and he understood the Tax Department had sent circulars around to these local bodies asking on what conditions they would be prepared to supply that department with the necessary returns for their use. He therefore wished to know what assistance the Government would be prepared to give these local bodies, on the condition that the necessary information was supplied to the Tax Department.

Mr. WARD said the Government could hold out no hope whatever of any direct contribution being given to the local bodies in this matter.

UNIVERSITY SCHOLARSHIPS FOR MAORIS.

Sir R. STOUT asked the Minister of Education, Whether he will make provision, either out of the Civil List (Native Purposes) or otherwise, for university scholarships for Maoris and half-castes? There had been one or two young Maoris educated in Canterbury College, and he was sure a considerable number more from Te Aute College would go thence to the different university colleges if there were means given them to do so. He thought, if the Government were to spend, perhaps, £150 or £200 a year on

the higher education of members of the Native race, that would help deserving students to at least attend the Auckland University College or the Canterbury College, and if one were established at Wellington they would be able to go there if they chose; but he believed it was best they should go to Auckland for the purpose, as the majority of the Maori population were resident in that provincial district, and perhaps its climate would be more suitable for them. If that were done, it would be of immense advantage to the Maori race. He had in his hand a letter that he had received from a young Maori who had been at Canterbury College. This young man called upon him when, a year ago, he was at Napier and conferred with him on the subject. As he himself had reaped the advantage of being educated at a university college, he was anxious that other young Maoris should have the same advantages that he had had. Now, there was every year a large sum of money remaining over from the Civil List which was not used up, and he did not think that in any year during the last ten years it had all been used for the purpose for which it was designed, and he thought that if a portion of it were applied to this purpose it would be money well spent. The Civil List was really set aside by the Imperial Government for purposes such as this, and he therefore asked the Minister of Education, if he could not obtain the money that would be needed out of the education vote, whether it might not be taken from the Civil List, to give to deserving students of the Maori race who might desire to proceed to a higher education the opportunity of attending one of the university colleges. He was sure it would be appreciated by the Maori race, and would be a perfectly justifiable means to which to apply some of that money.

Mr. REEVES thought the suggestion a very reasonable one. At present a number of the students at Te Aute College made a start with the matriculation examination, but did not proceed further, with the exception of the one gentleman to whom the honourable member had referred, Mr. Apirana Ngata, who went on to Canterbury College. With that exception, he did not think that any of them had gone on to the University, or had attempted to do so. In Mr. Ngata's case, he was able to do so because he was helped by the Makarini trustees. He did not know that there was more money now in the hands of the trustees, or any endowment to help these Native boys to go on to the university course. There were certainly no means for the purpose in the Education Department, and therefore they must fall back, as the honourable gentleman said, upon the Civil List. He would have very much pleasure in laying the matter before his colleague the Native Minister and suggesting whether he could not make provision out of the Civil List.

FOUNDATION OF THE COLONY.

On the motion of Mr. SEDDON, a Select Committee was appointed to inquire into and
Sir R. Stout

determine the proper date for the general holiday in anniversary celebration of the foundation of this colony; the Committee to have power to confer or to act jointly with any Committee appointed for a similar purpose by the Legislative Council: the Committee to consist of Mr. Button, Mr. Bell, Mr. Graham, Mr. Hogg, Mr. W. Hutchison, Major Steward, Mr. Saunders, Mr. Wilson, and the mover; three to form a quorum.

LAKE FORSYTH DRAINAGE BILL.

Mr. J. MCKENZIE, in moving the second reading of this Bill, said it was a very small matter. However, it was one that required legal enactment to make it of any use. This Bill was for the purpose of providing a small endowment to the Akaroa County Council for the purpose of draining the water out of Lake Forsyth after flood. The position was this: that at times this lake got filled up with water, and it destroyed large areas of private land about the lake. Then, the water backed up upon the public road, and also upon the railway; and the local body had no right to spend their money in draining the water out of the lake until such time as the road was covered, and by this time a considerable amount of damage was done to the railway, and to private property as well. The object of the Bill was to give to the Akaroa County Council a small endowment of a sandspit, which was not of very great value, but which would yield sufficient revenue to enable the lake always to be kept at a certain level. It was of very great importance to the district, and to the public as well, inasmuch as the railway—which belonged to the Crown—and the public road were continually being damaged by this water. He did not suppose there would be any objection raised to the Bill.

Mr. BELL asked if this was not a local Bill. How were they to know whether this land in the schedule belonged to the Crown? Was not the determining of such questions as this the very object of appointing a Local Bills Committee? He submitted this Bill came exactly within the definition of a local Bill as defined in their Standing Orders.

Mr. SPEAKER said there was a special tribunal appointed to decide such questions as whether a Bill was a public, a private, or a local Bill. He thought it would be advisable to send this Bill to the Joint Committee on Bills, in order that the question might be decided, but that need not interrupt the present proceedings. After the second reading he would, as Speaker, have it referred to the Joint Committee.

Mr. J. MCKENZIE would explain to the House that this was a Bill exactly in the same category as that passed last year in connection with Lake Ellesmere. This was an endowment given by the Crown to the Akaroa County Council for the purpose of keeping down the lake. The land was not at present vested in any local body.

Captain RUSSELL asked what was the value

of the land proposed to be given as an endowment.

Mr. J. McKENZIE replied that there were 1,000 acres of a sandspit, said to be worth about £40 a year, and that amount was considered requisite for the purpose of keeping the water of the lake at a certain level. He might point out that the land proposed to be dealt with was Crown land, and the House had a right to say whether they would deal with such an endowment or not.

Mr. SPEAKER said the honourable gentleman, the Minister of Lands, and other members interested in the Bill could go before the Select Committee, and there the matter of whether it was a public or a local Bill could be argued and dealt with.

Sir R. STOUT thought the honourable gentleman ought to give more information with reference to this Bill. He understood the people who bought the land around Lake Forsyth bought it knowing it was liable to flood, and consequently got it at a cheaper rate. The Government having sold this land at a cheap rate, he did not think it fair to give this endowment for the purpose of making that land valuable. If this county was to get an endowment of 1,000 acres to help it to drain this lake, he knew a great number of counties that had just as much right to get endowments for draining as this county had. He did not see why this County Council should get this endowment. If the Bill was held not to be a local Bill, he hoped it would be sent to the Waste Lands Committee, there to have evidence taken in order to see on what conditions this land was sold, to ascertain the value of this endowment, and to see whether it was fair to give to these people, who had bought the land at a merely nominal rate, an endowment to drain their own land. He did not think that was fair.

Captain RUSSELL desired to draw the Minister's attention to the fact that he was establishing the precedent that it was the duty of the Crown to set aside endowments for the drainage of swamps.

Mr. J. McKENZIE.—Oh, no.

Captain RUSSELL said he had a very recent case within his own memory where a very valuable district in Hawke's Bay was desolated by flood-water, and the people concerned could get no assistance of any kind from the Government. The people there had to do the drainage that was required themselves. If this Bill became law, then the people of any other district would have the right to petition Parliament to have the same concession extended to them that was proposed to be granted in the case of Lake Forsyth. It was a well-known fact that the waters of Lake Wairarapa submerged certain areas of land from time to time, and the people suffering damage there would have an equal right to come to the House and say that they should have the same consideration extended to them as the people around Lake Forsyth. There were large areas in different parts of New Zealand which were liable to be flooded, and, unless the Minister was prepared to say that where there was

land liable to be flooded he would ask Parliament to grant an endowment to avert injury, he could not see by what right the people of Lake Forsyth should be placed in an exceptional position. If the endowment were granted in the present instance, he was afraid the Minister would find he would get into trouble if he did not consent to treat alike all places similarly situated.

Mr. BUDDO would like to point out to the honourable member for Hawke's Bay that the drainage of Lake Forsyth was a necessity for the protection of Government property—the railway. The railway running between the lake and the road was affected very much by the rising of the flood-water as it ran into this lake. If there was an opening made to the sea, this opening got closed up very soon by the south-west gales; and the necessity was even greater for the protection of Government property than for the protection of the road, which ran along the hill side of the railway. It was a question more affecting the protection of Crown property, and in this case it should be considered as such, and not as an assistance to the local bodies interested.

Mr. R. McKENZIE said it appeared to him that the Government ought to make this a measure having general application throughout the colony. He knew of several lakes in this country where large areas of good land could be secured if they were only drained. Take Lake Brunner, for instance. There was no doubt at all that a very large area of land surrounding that lake could be brought into successful cultivation if drainage-works were carried out. The same could be done with regard to the Wairarapa and other lakes in the colony; and the Government should bring down a Bill, having general application, to carry out these works, unless they agreed with his view that lakes should be conserved as some of Nature's beauty-spots. This Bill was a local Bill pure and simple. If the Government was prepared to go in for the drainage of the lakes, and had lands for endowments for that purpose, then they ought to bring in a general Bill which would apply to the whole colony. He had not been at Lake Forsyth for many years, but he was quite certain the lake did not hurt the Little River Railway in the slightest degree. He never heard of any damage being done to it by the lake-waters. He would recommend the Minister to make this a general measure.

Dr. NEWMAN said it was all very nice for the honourable member for Ellesmere, who was a strong supporter of the Government, to get this Bill through. But why should that honourable gentleman get a plum like this? In the North Island there were lakes about Manawatu and all up the coast to Wanganui which were not considered, and yet they were represented by very good members from those parts of the country. It would be perfectly easy for the Minister to tell the House why this Bill should go through, and why this district should be specially favoured at the expense of every other district. Last year the

Minister had the Lake Ellesmere Bill, and now he had a Bill for Lake Forsyth, and next year he would come down for an endowment for the Akaroa Harbour. It would be perfectly easy, in Committee, to add the Wairarapa Lake, other lakes in Hawke's Bay, and several others in different parts of the North Island. A general Bill like that would give great *kudos* to the Minister, and he ought, therefore, to change this Bill into a general measure.

Mr. HALL was not in a position to give any opinion with regard to the benefit which this Bill would confer, but he wished to refer to the remarks made by the honourable member for Wellington Suburbs and the honourable member for Hawke's Bay. Those two honourable gentlemen had told the House that no local bodies should get grants, but they were both members of this House when three thousand acres of land near Woodville, which had passed for a long term into the hands of a man who farmed about thirty thousand acres, had been given to the Napier Harbour Board; and this was the position taken up by honourable gentlemen who were then in the House, and who belonged to the Government that gave that land away. Seeing that such grants had been given, they should not now turn round and protest that such grants should not be given to the public at all.

Mr. J. McKENZIE did not think the honourable gentlemen opposite were serious in their opposition to the Bill. They had had a Bill of a similar kind last year, introduced by the Hon. Sir John Hall, and not one word had been said against it by those honourable gentlemen. He therefore did not think that they could be at all serious in the matter now. It had been stated that the Bill was introduced simply because the honourable member whose district it concerned happened to be a Government supporter; but he could assure the House, as far as that was concerned, that the honourable gentleman in question was quite independent, and had a mind of his own. The people of this district were very much interested in this question, as this year a well-known stock-dealer had been drowned on the public road owing to the damming-up of the water from the lake in time of flood. In other parts of the colony they were asked to bridge rivers to prevent people from being drowned at certain periods of the year. This was the only road to that portion of the colony known as the Peninsula, and in time of flood it was covered to the extent of several feet; and under this Bill they were simply protecting the Government property—namely, the public road and railway. In reply to the senior member for Wellington City, he might also mention that a portion of the land mentioned was an education reserve, and, that being the case, he was quite sure that the honourable gentleman's support would be immediately given to the Bill when he knew that the cause of education would be promoted by the extra moneys received under the Bill. He might mention that the piece of land proposed to be given was simply a reserve of very little

value, but it could be improved, and in time it would be of more value. It was impossible to make this Bill general in its application, but he had no objection to referring it to the Local Bills Committee.

Bill read a second time.

NGAERE AND OTHER BLOCKS NATIVE CLAIMS ADJUSTMENT BILL.

Mr. J. McKENZIE, in moving the second reading of this Bill, said it was intended to settle a question in connection with a piece of land purchased by the Government from the Natives—namely, the Ngaere Swamp. This piece of land had been put through the Native Land Court some years ago by the late Hoani Pihama. On account of his death, some people who were interested in the matter raised a dispute in connection with it, and the Government thought the fairest way was to purchase this piece of land for the purpose of giving the money to the private individuals. In doing so, they had made an agreement with these people that a certain portion of the money should be kept back until such time as the Court decided who were the owners who were entitled to the money. Honourable members would see that the Bill was simply to give effect to this arrangement, and he believed the question as to who was to receive the sums of money could now be decided by the Native Land Court.

Mr. BELL asked, in regard to this Bill, if there was any protection. This was moved as a public Bill, and there was no provision under the Standing Orders by which such statements as were contained in the preamble could be verified. The preamble stated that the registered owners had sold to Her Majesty the Queen the said lands; but the owners might have something to say to that. He submitted that this was a private Bill, or that if it were not a private Bill it was a local Bill, and should be referred to the Committee, to specify who were the rightful owners of these blocks. There was no protection either for the Natives or Europeans if the preamble bound the rights of those persons mentioned.

Mr. SEDDON said that nobody was interested in the Bill except the Crown.

Mr. SPEAKER did not see the necessity for referring the Bill to the Local Bills Committee. The necessity for legislating on the subject seemed to spring from "The Native Lands Act, 1873." Whether or not it should go to the Native Affairs Committee he did not express an opinion on at present.

Mr. MITCHELSON would like the Minister to inform the House if the Ngaere Swamp was purchased by the officers of the Native Land Purchase Department, or by private individuals on commission. He, personally, was acquainted with the other two blocks mentioned in the Bill—namely, the Kauaeranga and Ngaturipukunui—and what the Minister stated,—that the Native owners had sold to the Crown the lands named in the schedule upon the understanding that the equitable ownership of other Natives was to be ascertained by the Court before the balance of the money

Dr. Newman

should be paid over,—was, he thought, not quite correct. Before leaving Auckland the Natives who had sold the two blocks waited on him, and had induced him to write to the Premier, with the object of having the balance of the purchase-money for the land now held by the Crown handed to them, they being the lawful owners, as they held the land under a Land Transfer title. It was quite true that the land named in the schedule was formerly owned by one Tirarau Kukupa, but the Natives who sold the land to the Crown had succeeded him under a will and by order of the Court. If the Bill passed, he hoped the Minister would take every step to have the matter adjudicated upon as early as possible, in order that the money now held by the Crown should be paid to those who sold the land, or who were held to be entitled to it.

Mr. HEKE desired to support the second reading, the matter being one he had urged several times. In regard to Native land, there was no such thing as individual rights, and the Government of New Zealand had made a big blunder in passing laws disregarding the true Native tenure and Native customs. The persons who were the owners of the Ngaturipukunui Block were inserted by the Native Land Court as trustees, and this could be borne out by several Natives who were living in and about the district at the present time. He thought it was only proper that the members of the hapu who claimed the right to the blocks should have an opportunity of establishing their right to the land. He would like to ask the member in charge of the Bill if he would agree to have other Native blocks of a similar nature inserted in the schedule of the Bill. There were other Native lands which required the same machinery to allow all the members of the hapu, who were undoubtedly entitled to the rights of the soil, to have an opportunity of establishing their claims to such lands. It was very unfair to debar these Natives from establishing their claims to this land. The argument might be raised, Why did not these Natives appear before the Native Land Court when it was first adjudicated upon? But he said that it was the duty of the Court to ask all the Natives present whether they agreed to have the name of a certain person or chief inserted in the title to their land. If such a question as that had been put to the Natives no doubt there would have been a better understanding than at the present time. The mere fact of their not having any record at that time of the mandate of the Court was largely the cause of trouble amongst the Natives. In those days when the Maoris placed full confidence in their chiefs, and the chiefs had the interests of their people at heart, unaffected by the bad European ways and customs, and ignorant of the technicalities of the law, the members of a hapu had no reason for suspicion as to what would be the result in after-years of such a procedure; therefore, under those circumstances, it was only natural for the members of a hapu or hapus to appoint their leading chief to represent them

in the title to the land. Unfortunately, in after-years the tendency was that the chief and other Natives whose names were inserted in the title at the time took upon themselves the responsibility of calling themselves the absolute owners of the land. Of course they were quite right in doing so under the nature of the title issued. The title was issued in their names, without any explanation being indorsed either on the title or in the records of the Court. He might say that the procedure set out in this Bill was necessary, and he would support it; but he would like to see other blocks also brought under the same action. If the Minister of Lands would do that he would be doing great justice to the Natives as a whole.

Mr. BELL said it had been stated that the only party interested in this matter was the Crown. If that had been so, there would have been no reason why the Bill should have been presented. That was not the case; the Crown had no interest in it at all. The moneys professedly belonged to certain Natives. This Bill was to allow inquiry as to whether other persons as well as the registered owners were entitled to the money. If the Bill had come down without the statement in the preamble it would have been unobjectionable; but, without the slightest proof, they declared positively and by Act that the registered owners had consented. It was wrong that Parliament should be asked to do that. If this kind of thing went on, all kinds of rights might be invaded. This might seem a technical objection, but it was far more. It was a question not so much relating to the Natives concerned in this particular measure, but generally to legislation. Where Parliament was dealing with matters generally it could put what it liked into a preamble and no harm would be done; but it was different when they were dealing with special matters, for if they set out in the preamble circumstances of which they knew nothing, then they might be doing a wrong, and occasionally very great wrong must be done. It had been said that there was no question about it, but it appeared from what the honourable member for Eden had said that there was a question whether the Natives had or had not consented. He purposed giving his voice against the Bill, because it contained statements in the preamble which had not been proved, and he would venture to say no honourable member had a right to vote for it until proved in the proper and legitimate method. A measure of this kind should be submitted to a Committee beforehand.

Sir R. STOUT hoped the honourable member would consent to send this Bill to the Native Affairs Committee. This was a Native Bill, and that Committee had a right to investigate the matter. Honourable members would see what this Bill meant. It meant the disposal of a very large sum of money. No doubt there was a process of inquiry before the Native Land Court, but the object was to give the money over to certain parties who claimed to be the equitable owners. He did not object to the Bill, because he knew there were many

cases—this was not the only one—in which Maoris who were equitably entitled to lands, or to moneys coming from lands, had been entirely deprived of their rights through the way in which the Native Land Court had admitted that only certain members were owners of a block. But at the same time he thought the honourable member would do well to have this matter investigated by the Native Affairs Committee. That, he thought, was only fair and reasonable, and he hoped that the honourable gentleman would have no objection to it.

Mr. CARROLL would like to inform the last speaker that this matter had been before the Native Affairs Committee on several previous occasions. Last year this whole question had been by petition before the Native Affairs Committee, all particulars had been gone into, and it had been ascertained by the Native Affairs Committee that there were several members of the tribe who were entitled to be regarded as equitable owners in the Ngaere Block, but who could not now participate in it. He had no personal knowledge about the other blocks, but, speaking of the Ngaere Block, he might inform the House that the whole question had been gone into in every detail and particular, and that the general opinion of the Committee was that if the Crown bought the property the money should be conserved, and that the Native Land Court should be authorised by legislation to ascertain who the owners were, so that they might receive benefit from it.

Mr. PARATA thought this Bill should go before the Native Affairs Committee. That was the proper course; it should go to the Committee, and that would remove all suspicion and all doubts. He did not oppose the Bill, but he favoured its being referred to that Committee.

Mr. SEDDON said his experience of the Native Affairs Committee was that its progress was so slow that if they wanted to kill the Bill they should certainly refer it to that Committee. This Bill had, he believed, been well threshed out, all its details were well known, and there was nothing at all objectionable in it. It referred simply to the blocks mentioned in the schedule, and to the purchasers from the Government.

Mr. G. HUTCHISON said, with reference to the Ngaere Block, which was the most important of the three mentioned in the schedule, he could assure the House, from some knowledge of the facts, that the circumstances relating to that block were as indicated in the recital of the Bill. The purchase was only effected upon the understanding that some measure of this kind would be introduced; otherwise the Government would not have been able to acquire what he considered a very desirable and valuable acquisition.

Mr. J. MCKENZIE would point out to the House, and especially to those honourable gentlemen who were very anxious to conserve the interests of the Natives, that if they were really desirous of doing so they should allow this Bill to proceed. The Crown was in no way

interested in this matter. They already had the land and were settling people upon it. The whole question was, Who was to get the money? If the Natives wanted the Bill to be delayed, let them send it to the Native Affairs Committee and they would succeed. He would state, in answer to the question by the honourable member for Eden, that he could not say positively who bought the block, but to the best of his recollection an agent offered it to the Government on behalf of the Natives, but the Government declined to pay him any commission but sent their own agent to the district, and the purchase was completed by him. If he was wrong in making this statement he would correct it when the Bill was going into Committee. He would have full inquiries made, and give the information to the honourable gentleman. With regard to the matter dealt with in the Bill, he might say it had been threshed out time after time before the Native Affairs Committee, and it was on the recommendation of the Native Affairs Committee of last year that the Government had brought down this Bill for the purpose of submitting to the Native Land Court the whole question of who was entitled to the money. He could not conceive what possible evil could be done by passing the Bill, or why it should be sent to the Native Affairs Committee, because the whole question as to who was entitled to receive the money was to be settled, not by any Committee of the House, but by the Native Land Court, which would have full power to go into the whole transaction and find out who were the real owners and who should get the money. He hoped that the honourable members who represented the Native race would withdraw their objection, though, so far as the Government were concerned, he might say they were in possession of the land and were placing settlers upon it. It was the Natives themselves, who were desirous of getting the money, that were interested.

Bill read a second time.

KIRIKIRI NATIVE SCHOOL SITE BILL.

Mr. REEVES, in moving the second reading of this Bill, said the Board of Education at Auckland were willing to purchase the Kirikiri School, and to open a school in the building that they had been using as a Native school for years past. The Education Department was most anxious that the Board should open a school in the district, and thought it should make use of this school-building and site. The difficulty, however, was to get the Native owner, a chief named Taupere, who was the only surviving owner, to sell the site to the Board. Under the Act the Board was not allowed to give more than a certain price. Taupere was willing to sell for £200, and the Government were of opinion that the Board, who were anxious to do so, should buy it at that price. The department were of opinion that the House might fairly facilitate this transaction, and then they would be able to get a good school open in that district, and conducted by the Board.

Sir R. Stout

Dr. NEWMAN said that the honourable gentleman had stated that this was a wholly uncontentious Bill, but he happened to be a member of the Committee which considered this Bill, and he thought it was a very contentious Bill indeed. The position was this: The piece of land was valued by an assessor of the Government, and also for local rating purposes, and it stood in the books at about £31, and, in addition to that, there was £16 for a right-of-way, bringing it up to about £48 in all. He was positive the land could have been had for £48. Negotiations had gone on with the Natives, and the price had gradually been increased from £70 to £100, and then to £150, and now it was proposed to pay £200. This was a gross waste of public money. The Minister in charge was offering the Natives something like five times the value of the land as it was valued for property-tax purposes and by the Government's own assessor. He was aware the honourable gentleman was doing this for the sake of peace. Negotiations had been going on for two or three years. The land might have been purchased some time ago for £48, and now they were going to pay £200 for it.

Mr. REEVES said it could not have been had for £48.

Dr. NEWMAN said the land was valued at £48, and a little later on the Natives were willing to sell for a very little more than that figure. The negotiations were hung up for a time, and the price was then raised to £100, and then to £150, and now it was £200. Why should these Natives be offered £200 for land that was worth only £48? He thought that at the outside £75 should be paid for this section, but to offer £200 was altogether out of the question.

Mr. THOMPSON would like the Minister to tell the House how much land they were going to get for this £200. The position was this: that whatever was done in connection with this piece of land it would be taken as a precedent by the Natives, and it would be almost impossible to deal with them for land for school purposes anywhere in the North Island after this transaction. This Bill showed the lax way the Native-schools department had of doing business as to school-buildings on land for which they had no proper title. He knew another case in the north, at a place called Tangitiroria. He did not know whether that matter had been settled, but he understood that a short time ago there was a difficulty in allowing the Board of Education to use the building as a school, although it had been used by the Native-schools department for many years. He thought the House should have the fullest information before they passed the Bill, because whatever was done in this case would be taken as a precedent by the Natives. The idea of giving £200 for this small section of land was out of the question. The Minister had given no information to the House at all. In fact, he believed the honourable gentleman knew very little indeed about the transactions in the Native-schools department. The whole business of that department seemed to be

allowed to drift into the hands of irresponsible persons, and the Minister did not seem to take the trouble to make himself acquainted with what was going on; and this Bill appeared to be the result of that system of management. He would suggest that after the second reading the Bill should be referred to the Native Affairs Committee.

Mr. REEVES said he would give details and all information about the Bill in Committee. The personal reference made by the honourable member was entirely uncalled-for. The honourable member had not advanced a tittle of evidence to show that he (Mr. Reeves) did not understand this transaction. He might mention that negotiations had gone on for some time, and the Natives asked £250 for the section. The department refused to give that, and the Natives refused to sell for less. Over and over again he refused to pay more than the fair value of the property. However, rather than force the Board of Education to acquire another site and put up another school-building in the neighbourhood, he thought it would be better to come to a compromise with the Natives.

Bill read a second time.

Mr. THOMPSON moved, That the Bill be referred to the Native Affairs Committee.

Mr. REEVES said there was absolutely no necessity for such a course. Honourable members might question him as to the details when the Bill was in Committee in the House. It was not a matter for the Native Affairs Committee at all. He would ask the House to let the Bill proceed in the ordinary way.

Motion, by leave, withdrawn.

RATING ON UNIMPROVED VALUE BILL.

The House divided on the question, "That this Bill be committed."

AYES, 39.

Buddo	Larnach	Pirani
Carncross	Lawry	Reeves
Carnell	Mackintosh	Seddon
Carroll	Maslin	Smith, G. J.
Collins	McGowan	Stevens
Duncan	McKenzie, J.	Steward
Flatman	McKenzie, R.	Tanner
Graham	McLachlan	Thompson
Guinness	Mills	Ward
Hall	Morrison	Willis.
Hall-Jones	O'Regan	<i>Tellers.</i>
Hogg	Parata	Harris
Houston	Pinkerton	Montgomery.
Kelly, J. W.		

NOES, 16.

Allen	Hutchison, G.	Russell, W. R.
Buchanan	Hutchison W.	Stout.
Button	Mackenzie, T.	
Earnshaw	McGuire	<i>Tellers.</i>
Fraser	McNab	Bell
Heke	Newman	Massey.

PAIRS.

<i>For.</i>	<i>Against.</i>
Cadman	Mitchelson
Joyce	Duthie

Kelly, W. Te Ao
Smith, E. M. Green.

Majority for, 23.

Bill committed.

ADULTERATION PREVENTION BILL. IN COMMITTEE.

Clause 3.—All bread to be sold in loaves of certain weight.

Mr. SEDDON moved to insert the words "rolls, cakes, or confectionery" after the words "Nothing in this Act shall extend or apply to."

The Committee divided on the question, "That the words proposed to be inserted be so inserted."

AYES, 35.

Allen	Heke	Pere
Bell	Hogg	Pirani
Buddo	Houston	Reeves
Buick	Kelly, J. W.	Saunders
Carnell	Mackenzie, T.	Seddon
Carroll	Mackintosh	Stevens
Duncan	McKenzie, J.	Te Ao
Fraser	McNab	Thompson
Green	Meredith	Ward.
Hall	Mitchelson	<i>Tellers.</i>
Hall-Jones	Montgomery	Hutchison, W.
Harris	Parata	Mills.

NOES, 22.

Buchanan	Lawry	Smith, G. J.
Button	Maslin	Stout
Collins	McGowan	Tanner
Crowther	Morrison	Willis.
Flatman	Newman	<i>Tellers.</i>
Graham	Pinkerton	Massey
Hutchison, G.	Russell, G. W.	McLachlan.
Lang	Russell, W. R.	

PAIRS.

<i>For.</i>	<i>Against.</i>
Cadman	Mitchelson
Joyce.	Duthie.

Majority for, 13.

Words inserted.

Mr. SEDDON moved, That the words "bread made up into rolls or French twists" be struck out.

The Committee divided on the question, "That the words be retained."

AYES, 22.

Buchanan	Maslin	Smith, G. J.
Button	Massey	Stout
Collins	McGowan	Te Ao
Crowther	McLachlan	Willis.
Flatman	Mitchelson	<i>Tellers.</i>
Graham	Morrison	Mackenzie, T.
Heke	Pinkerton	Russell, W. R.
Lang	Saunders	

NOES, 36.

Allen	Carroll	Hall-Jones
Bell	Duncan	Hogg
Buddo	Fraser	Houston
Buick	Green	Hutchison, G.
Carnell	Hall	Hutchison, W.

Kelly, J. W.	O'Regan	Stevens
Lawry	Parata	Tanner
Mackintosh	Pere	Thompson
McKenzie, J.	Pirani	Ward.
McNab	Reeves	<i>Tellers.</i>
Meredith	Russell, G. W.	Harris
Mills	Seddon	Montgomery.
Newman		

PAIRS.

<i>For.</i>	<i>Against.</i>
Cadman	Mitchelson
Joyce.	Duthie.

Majority against, 14.

Words struck out.

Mr. MORRISON moved, That the words, "or to any description of fancy bread," be added to the clause.

The Committee divided.

AYES, 29.

Bell	Hutchison, G.	Pinkerton
Buchanan	Lang	Pirani
Button	Lawry	Russell, W. R.
Collins	Mackenzie, T.	Saunders
Crowther	Mackintosh	Smith, G. J.
Flatman	Massey	Stout
Graham	McGowan	Te Ao.
Green	Mitchelson	<i>Tellers.</i>
Harris	Montgomery	Morrison
Heke	O'Regan	Willis.

NOES, 27.

Allen	Kelly, J. W.	Russell, G. W.
Buddo	Maslin	Seddon
Buick	McKenzie, J.	Stevens
Carnell	McKenzie, R.	Tanner
Carroll	McNab	Thompson
Duncan	Meredith	Ward.
Hall	Newman	<i>Tellers.</i>
Hall-Jones	Parata	Hogg
Houston	Reeves	Mills.
Hutchison, W.		

PAIRS.

<i>For.</i>	<i>Against.</i>
Cadman	Mitchelson
Joyce.	Duthie.

Majority for, 2.

Words inserted.

Mr. W. HUTCHISON moved to add the following new clause:—

"Provided that no person shall be liable to be convicted under this Act, or under 'The Adulteration Prevention Act, 1880,' and 'The Adulteration Prevention Act 1880 Amendment Act, 1883,' in respect of the sale of any article of food or of any drug, if he shows to the satisfaction of the Justice or Court before whom he is charged that he did not know of the article of food or drug sold by him being so adulterated, and that he could not with reasonable diligence have obtained that knowledge."

The Committee divided on the question, "That the clause be read a second time."

AYES, 6.

Button	Smith, G. J.	<i>Tellers.</i>
Heke	Stout.	Hutchison, W.
		Morrison.

NOES, 41.

Bell	Lang	Reeves
Buddo	Lawry	Russell, G. W.
Buick	Maslin	Russell, W. R.
Carnell	McGowan	Saunders
Carroll	McKenzie, R.	Seddon
Collins	McLachlan	Stevens
Duncan	McNab	Tanner
Flatman	Meredith	Thompson
Graham	Mills	Ward
Green	Montgomery	Willis
Hall	Newman	Wilson.
Harris	O'Regan	<i>Tellers.</i>
Hogg	Pinkerton	Crowther
Kelly, J. W.	Pirani	Mackenzie, T.

PAIRS.

<i>For.</i>	<i>Against.</i>
Cadman	Mitchelson
Joyce	Duthie
McKenzie, J.	Buchanan.

Majority against, 35.

New clause negatived.

Bill reported, with amendments.

DESIGNATION OF DISTRICTS (No. 2) BILL.

IN COMMITTEE.

Clause 3.—Governor in Council may, with their consent, alter names of boroughs and counties.

Sir R. STOUT moved, That the words "as suggested by such Council" be inserted after the words "or borough in the colony."

The Committee divided on the question, "That the words proposed to be inserted be so inserted."

AYES, 16.

Allen	Lang	Smith, G. J.
Buddo	Massey	Tanner.
Button	Mitchelson	
Collins	Newman	<i>Tellers.</i>
Crowther	O'Regan	Buick
Earnshaw	Russell, W. R.	Stout.

NOES, 27.

Carnell	McGowan	Russell, G. W.
Duncan	McKenzie, R.	Seddon
Flatman	McNab	Stevens
Graham	Meredith	Steward
Hall	Mills	Thompson
Hall-Jones	Morrison	Ward.
Harris	Parata	<i>Tellers.</i>
Houston	Pinkerton	Hogg
Lawry	Pirani	Montgomery.
Maslin		

PAIRS.

<i>For.</i>	<i>Against.</i>
Cadman	Green
Joyce	Duthie
Kelly, W.	Te Ao
McKenzie, J.	Buchanan.

Majority against, 11.

Amendment negatived.

Words not inserted.

Mr. WARD moved, That the following words be added to the clause: "and in all such

alterations and future naming, preference shall be given to the original Maori names."

The Committee divided on the question, "That the words proposed to be inserted be so inserted."

AYES, 34.

Carncross	Lawry	Pirani
Carroll	Mackenzie, T.	Reeves
Collins	Maslin	Smith, G. J.
Crowther	McGowan	Stevens
Duncan	McNab	Stout
Earnshaw	Mills	Ward
Flatman	Mitchelson	Willis
Graham	Montgomery	Wilson.
Harris	Morrison	
Hogg	Newman	<i>Tellers.</i>
Kelly, J. W.	Parata	Carnell
Lang	Pinkerton	McLachlan.

NOES, 14.

Buddo	Meredith	Tanner
Buick	O'Regan	Thompson.
Hall	Russell, G. W.	<i>Tellers.</i>
Hall-Jones	Russell, W. R.	Button
McKenzie, R.	Steward	Massey.

PAIRS.

<i>For.</i>	<i>Against.</i>
Cadman	Green
Joyce	Duthie
Kelly, W.	Te Ao
McKenzie, J.	Buchanan.

Majority for, 20.

Amendment carried.

Words inserted.

Clause 4.—Where two or more towns, &c., have similar names, Governor may alter name of either.

Mr. PIRANI moved, That the words, "or the population of which is smaller than that of the place of a similar name," be inserted after the words "under such name," in the first paragraph.

Amendment negatived.

Mr. PIRANI moved the addition of the following new clause: "Notwithstanding anything contained in clause four of this Act, the Governor may alter the name of any town which is named similarly to another borough of larger population, instead of altering the designation according to age."

The Committee divided.

AYES, 21.

Carroll	McKenzie, R.	Stout
Collins	McNab	Ward
Crowther	Newman	Willis
Hall	O'Regan	Wilson.
Hall-Jones	Reeves	<i>Tellers.</i>
Heke	Russell, W. R.	Kelly, J. W.
Hogg	Stevens	Pirani.
Lawry		

NOES, 30.

Allen	Carnell	Harris
Buchanan	Duncan	Lang
Buddo	Earnshaw	Maslin
Buick	Flatman	Massey
Button	Graham	McGowan
Carncross	Green	McLachlan

Meredith	Pinkerton	Thompson.
Mills	Russell, G. W.	Tellers.
Montgomery	Seddon	Fraser
Morrison	Smith, G. J.	Mackenzie, T.
Parata		

PAIRS.

For.	Against.
Cadman	Mitchelson
Joyce	Duthie
Kelly, W.	Te Ao.

Majority against, 9.

Motion negatived.

Bill reported, and read a third time.

The House adjourned at two o'clock a.m.

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

Thursday, 6th September, 1894.

Second Readings—Third Readings—Riverton Harbour Board Empowering Bill—Gaming Bill.

The Hon. the SPEAKER took the chair at half-past two o'clock.

PRAYERS.

SECOND READINGS.

Waimakariri—Ashley Water-supply Board Loan Bill, Newmarket Hall Bill.

THIRD READINGS.

Dunedin Loans Conversion Bill, Auckland Harbour Board Empowering Bill.

RIVERTON HARBOUR BOARD EMPOWERING BILL.

ADJOURNED DEBATE.

The Hon. Mr. REYNOLDS did not know that he had much more to say upon this Bill. He only wanted to point out that a very superior harbour could be made there.

An Hon. MEMBER.—At what cost?

The Hon. Mr. REYNOLDS thought the cost was about £340,000. But the question was, whether the population there and the trade of the port would warrant such an expenditure. He thought it might warrant the expenditure just as much as the New Plymouth Harbour warranted the expenditure there. But the New Plymouth Harbour had had any amount of assistance from the Government, and very unjustly so as regarded the colony. Part of the revenue from the lands which were confiscated and set aside to recoup the £3,000,000 which was borrowed in 1863 for defence purposes during the Maori war had been devoted to the purposes of this harbour. A late Government, after the abolition of the provinces, passed an Act by which one-fourth of the gross receipts from that confiscated land was to be handed over to the New Plymouth Harbour. That was completely in violation of the undertaking in reference to the three-million loan. When the Act authorising that loan was passed, the whole of the confiscated land was supposed to repay the three millions, but not a penny of it, so far as

he knew, had been devoted to that purpose. With regard to this Bill, he had only to say that there was great danger in passing a Bill of this kind, inasmuch as in time to come the Government might be compelled to take over the harbour and pay heavy compensation. His experience—and it had been a pretty long experience—was that, in passing a Bill of this nature, the colony came under greater liability than appeared upon the face of the measure. If they took, for example, the Midland Railway, under a syndicate, they would see what was the result to the colony. Then, it would be very improper for the Council to sanction any syndicate's having the power over this harbour for any period not exceeding fifty years. He thought that alone was sufficient to condemn the Bill. But he felt in a most peculiar position. It had been passed by the other branch of the Legislature by a large majority, many of whom did not at all believe in the Bill, and in their heart wanted and fully expected that it would be thrown out by the Council. That he thought, to use a very mild term, was rather unfair—to make a cat's-paw of the Council, and throw upon it the onus of rejecting the Bill.

The Hon. Sir P. A. BUCKLEY thought that was a reflection upon the other branch of the Legislature.

The Hon. Mr. REYNOLDS said he did not reflect more upon the other branch of the Legislature than the other branch reflected upon them.

The Hon. Sir P. A. BUCKLEY rose to a point of order. It was a direct violation of their Standing Orders. If members of the other branch had done wrong, that was no reason why the Council should do wrong also. He was surprised at the most experienced member and the Nestor of the Council making such remarks.

The Hon. Mr. REYNOLDS could not refer to this Bill without giving his reasons for voting in the direction in which he intended to vote. He thought he was perfectly justified in what he was saying.

The Hon. Mr. SPEAKER did not think the honourable member should use the word "cat's-paw."

The Hon. Mr. REYNOLDS said, well, the other branch of the Legislature threw the responsibility upon the Council of not passing a measure which they thought superfluous, or decidedly bad, and which would never have passed excepting under certain pressure by the Government Whips. He thought it was right that the Council should understand thoroughly what they were doing in dealing with the Bill before them. Personally he was very much disposed to support the Bill, so as to show that the Council was not necessarily going to reject Bills which those who voted for them in another place had supported merely for party purposes, and never desired them to be passed by the Council.

The Hon. Mr. SHRIMSKI said his honourable friend was very often in error. It was not the late Government which granted the endowment to the New Plymouth Harbour Board.

It was the Grey Government, he begged to remind the honourable gentleman.

An Hon. MEMBER.—No.

The Hon. Mr. SHRIMSKI said that the honourable gentleman would find that he (Mr. Shrimski) was right. This was one of those little Bills which passed the other evening in the other branch of the Legislature. Sixteen Bills were passed in a very short space of time. He would just give a specimen of how much attention was paid to these various measures. Five of those Bills were passed through Committee and third reading, and nine were passed through their second reading, committal, and third reading; and consequently honourable gentlemen could understand what time and attention had been paid to these measures. He thought they would be acting rightly by giving this measure that despatch which he thought under the circumstances it deserved. He had great sympathy with the honourable gentleman who promoted the Bill, and he was sure that gentleman deserved all credit for the energy and perseverance which he had displayed. But, at the same time, having some knowledge of harbours which had been made at enormous cost in other places, and which had been very unprofitable to the inhabitants, and had involved them in heavy taxation, he thought he would be acting in the best interests of the whole country by moving, *That this Bill be read the second time that day three months.*

The Hon. Mr. RIGG intended to support this measure, although he must say he had a very great objection against what he might term skeleton measures—already this session they had passed one—because it appeared to him that they would be subsequently called upon to give full force and effect to these measures. Had this Bill come down with all the necessary machinery and provisions to make it a real, live measure he would have been found voting against it; but, as it stood, it would require a second Bill to give effect to it, and so he intended to vote in favour of this Bill, but entirely without prejudice. As regarded the Bill itself, he thought it was desirable that it should be so amended that when the powers were handed over to a syndicate, as they probably would be, the rating-power should extend to the whole County of Wallace, and not be confined to the borough. He thought that would be an improvement, although, at the same time, he thought it was undesirable that they should encourage the formation of foreign syndicates for the purpose of exploiting the country. His principal reason for voting for the Bill was much the same as that which influenced the Hon. Mr. Reynolds. A Bill, he took it, whether it was brought into this branch of the Legislature or into the other, should be treated according to its merits. If it was a Bill which should not be passed it ought to receive a quick despatch, but, if it was a Bill which should be supported and passed, it ought to be supported and passed. This Bill was a measure which had come before a branch of the Legislature for a number of years, and the promoter had been led to be-

lieve that he would ultimately succeed in passing it. Now the onus of killing the Bill was thrown upon the Council, and of disappointing a man whose heart and soul was in the passing of this measure, and who had been unfairly encouraged to believe that it was going to become law. He was not prepared to say by whom he was encouraged, but he thought, under the circumstances, the gentleman referred to had not been treated in a way that a member of the Legislature should be treated—a member who was so much in earnest. That being the case, the Bill would have his vote, and what little help he could give the measure in the Council.

The Hon. Mr. BOWEN was very sorry that questions of great importance to the country, as all these Bills were, should be dealt with on any personal grounds whatever, whether of sympathy or anything else. The question for the Council was, Was it a proper Bill to pass? He did not think that they had anything to do with what had been done in another branch of the Legislature. It had been alleged that the Bill had been passed in another place with the intention that the Council should throw it out. It was not their business to consider that question. Their business was to consider whether it was right to pass the Bill or not. With their experience of the wasteful expenditure on comparatively small harbours, apart from any personal question, when they had such examples as the overburdened ratepayers of Gisborne and Oamaru, and the troubles of New Plymouth,—when they knew that the harbour of Dunedin was in difficulties, a large harbour belonging to one of the most important and populous districts in the country,—when they knew that in many places there were these difficulties, to ask that they should pass a vague Bill of this sort, handing over the powers of the Corporation for fifty years to come, or giving authority to hand over those powers, to a syndicate in order to build up a most expensive harbour within a not very great distance of an exceedingly good natural harbour on the same coast, was not, he thought, reasonable. He did not think that any reasonable person, who was not interested and blinded by local interests, could conceive that it was right to pass a Bill like this. He had heard what had been said as to sympathy with the promoter of the Bill. Nobody wished to hurt the feelings of any honourable gentleman in either House, but that was beside the question altogether. And as to the very indefensible reasons which were said to have induced the other House to pass this Bill, he did not think that any attention whatever should be paid to them. He would support the motion of the honourable gentleman opposite.

The Hon. Mr. KERR said it was his intention to support the Bill. The measure had been before the other branch of the Legislature for the last six years, and he thought the introducer of the Bill during that time had had many opportunities to impress on the members of the Legislature the virtues of the Bill, and it had often been explained to them how bene-

ficial it would be to the district, and also how the ways and means would be met. Had that honourable gentleman been a member of the Council, and introduced this Bill six years ago, and continued praising it ever since and showing its virtues to honourable members, perhaps it might after these six years have been carried. Now, during all these years there had been no complaints from the people in the district as to the likelihood of its being a source of danger to them in the way of liability. On the contrary, it had been held that it would be an immense advantage to the Town of Riverton and to the County of Wallace; and, considering these matters, he thought the people who were particularly interested in this work were the best witnesses as to its good or evil to the place. It had been stated that this Bill had been hurriedly put through without consideration; but, from what he had said, honourable members would see it had not been hurried through. It was certainly a good record of the other House to put sixteen Bills through in a single night. He wished they more often took a fit of the same description. These Bills had come before honourable members, and they had had time to consider the Bills before they were likely to come up for discussion. Perhaps the Council had not on any previous occasion put sixteen Bills through in so short a time; but they had put seven or eight Bills through in much less time. He thought he was correct in stating that he had seen, at any rate, six or seven Bills put through within an hour. Certainly they had been fully considered in Committee, and probably whipped up a little bit and passed without objection being made. Now, seeing the great interest that was taken in this Bill by the residents of the districts concerned, and that no argument had been adduced why it should be thrown out, he would vote for the measure. It had been stated that it was a skeleton measure. Well, of course, it was not workable at the present time; it would have to come before the Legislature again, just in the same way as another Bill which they had passed the other day—namely, the Wellington University College Bill—which would have to come before them once more before it could be a workable measure. He thought, therefore, honourable members ought to put these Bills together. Let them come before the Council again in order that they might have the required substance put into them. He would vote for the second reading of this Bill.

The Hon. Mr. REYNOLDS wished to make an explanation. The Hon. Mr. Shrimski had stated that it was not, but he (Mr. Reynolds) said it was, provided in "The Financial Arrangements Act, 1876," under the Land Fund, that Taranaki should receive one-fourth of the gross proceeds from lands. Subsection (6) of section 4 stated, "In the case of Taranaki, with the percentage payable under 'The New Plymouth Harbour Board Endowment Act, 1874.'" This Act merely provided for allocation to the harbour of a fourth of the proceeds of waste lands of the Crown, and not of the confiscated lands,

Hon. Mr. Kerr

the proceeds from which were to recoup the three-million loan of 1863.

The Hon. Mr. KELLY thought the honourable gentleman was mixing up his dates. The fact of the matter was that the authority for making a harbour was given by the Legislature in 1874, not by the provincial ordinance to which the honourable gentleman referred, which was passed in 1875. Authority was given by the Legislature in 1874 to the Provincial Government of Taranaki to appropriate one-fourth of the land revenue.

An Hon. MEMBER.—Confiscated lands.

The Hon. Mr. KELLY said that was declared ordinary land of the Crown by the Act of 1877.

An Hon. MEMBER.—No.

The Hon. Mr. KELLY.—In fact, before the money was borrowed by the New Plymouth Harbour Board all this confiscated land became waste lands of the Crown, and consequently operated on for harbour-works under the Act of 1874.

An Hon. MEMBER.—No.

The Hon. Mr. KELLY said certainly it was; he could prove it. What he wished to remark was that some reflection had been cast upon the Provincial District of Taranaki by the Hon. Sir George Whitmore, owing to default having been made by the Harbour Board some years ago. He said that default affected the credit of the colony. Now, that was not exactly correct. The bondholders of the New Plymouth Harbour Board loan were quite satisfied with the action of the Harbour Board—they had not the slightest fault to find with the Board, and they stated so in their letters to the Board; but they did find fault with the Legislature for taking away some of their endowments, and their grievance was entirely one against the Legislature and the Government of the day, which were responsible for those endowments being taken away, and, so far, affecting the ability of the Harbour Board of New Plymouth to pay its interest. Now, with respect to that particular Harbour Board, although they had levied the full rate of $\frac{1}{2}$ d. on the capital value, the amount of rate now collected in the whole collecting-area was near £8,000 a year, and that would shortly increase to £10,000 for rates on the land, irrespective of land revenue. Two years ago the Board was in default £12,000; £8,000 of that had been paid up, and they were only now in default, or would be next November, £4,000; and after that period they would pay every farthing owing to the bondholders, and pay also all that was required for the maintenance of the staff, but not sufficient to pay for the repairs to the breakwater and for dredging, unless a less rate of interest was charged.

The Hon. the SPEAKER called the honourable gentleman's attention to the fact that the Bill under discussion was the Riverton Harbour Board Empowering Bill.

The Hon. Mr. KELLY said he must apologize to the Hon. the Speaker for referring to Taranaki, but he would not have referred to it had it not been that two or three speakers

who preceded him had alluded to the New Plymouth Harbour Board in terms of disparagement. Therefore he thought he was only right in replying to their remarks. It was unfortunate that the Hon. the Speaker had not called those honourable gentlemen to order at an earlier stage of the debate. With respect to the Bill now before the Council he had not much to say. It was one of that class of Bills which had been referred to before in the Council as ships without guns, and it could do no possible harm in its present shape, because before the Bill came into operation there must be a poll of the ratepayers in the Borough of Riverton. He intended in Committee, if the Bill reached that stage, to move that the poll should include the ratepayers of the County of Wallace. They ought to be included, as they might possibly be affected in the future. He thought himself that these people were taking up a very large responsibility. In so small a district as that to encounter a liability of this kind was a rather dangerous matter, seeing that it involved the expending of money on works in deep water. He was afraid they were undertaking a liability they would never be able to deal with, and that the thing was likely to end in disaster. At the present stage of the Bill, however, he did not feel warranted in voting for the amendment. He would therefore vote for the second reading, reserving to himself to take what action he saw fit at any future stage.

The Hon. Mr. MONTGOMERY hoped this Bill would not be rejected on the second reading. There were no new powers asked for except authority to transfer to a syndicate the powers which the Corporation of Riverton had got at the present time. The Bill did not ask for any grants of either money or endowments. As he had stated, it did not ask for anything beyond the transference of the powers of the Corporation to a syndicate prepared to carry out the work which the Corporation wished to have carried out, and which powers the Corporation could exercise without reference to Parliament at all. He might point out that any agreement that might be made by the Corporation with the syndicate must come before the Governor in Council for approval, and that the Governor in Council had to see that proper security was given that this syndicate would carry out the agreement entered into with the Corporation; further, that the ratepayers, by clause 11, must be consulted and a poll taken before the Act came into operation. He asked honourable members to consider whether the transference of these powers from the Corporation to the syndicate, giving the syndicate no greater power than the Corporation had now, endangered the colony in any shape or way. That was, he thought, the entire question. The Hon. Mr. Bowen had said there was no need for a harbour at Riverton because it was only a short distance from another good harbour. Now, they knew, he dared say, such localities throughout New Zealand, and he granted, if there was a harbour so close to another har-

bour in the same arm of the sea, it might be a matter for consideration whether they should make grants or give fresh powers to do something that required the colony to give money; but he thought it would be rather a dangerous thing for them to say that they would not allow this harbour to be proceeded with because it was only a certain number of miles from another harbour. The Corporation could do the works now if it thought proper; but it thought a syndicate would be found which could do the work much better. And, as he had said, the Government was to take care that there was security given by any syndicate, and the inhabitants had to declare their concurrence; and, before the work could be proceeded with, a special Act of Parliament required to be passed. If that was not sufficient security to enable honourable members to vote for the second reading of this Bill, he questioned whether the Corporation would ever obtain the necessary authority from the ratepayers at the poll.

The Hon. Captain MORRIS said that, after what the Hon. Mr. Montgomery had said, he had really very few words to say. He was a supporter of the Bill, and he would have great pleasure in voting for the second reading. He only wished to say that in Committee he would move to extend the rating-limits so as to include the Provincial District of Otago. It seemed to him that the Bill was of such importance that it would not be desirable to give authority for the necessary powers unless that amendment were made.

The Hon. Mr. FELDWICK only wished to make a remark or two in reply. He was very much pleased to hear the expressions of esteem that had been used in the Council towards an honourable gentleman in another place; and he made special reference to this because from the tenor of the speeches it might be thought those compliments were addressed to himself, who did not deserve them so well as the honourable gentleman to whom he alluded. All he need do now was to reiterate that this rule could not be made absolute without the ratification of this high and supreme Court. It amounted to little more than this: that an invitation was to be offered for tenders to be sent in, with the usual proviso that the highest or lowest tender would not necessarily be accepted. He saw no reason to detain the Council any further. He thought honourable members had made up their minds, and he hoped they would allow the Bill to go into Committee.

The Council divided on the question, "That the word 'now' stand part of the question."

AYES, 13.

Buckley	McCullough	Swanson
Dignan	Montgomery	Taiaroa
Feldwick	Morris	Wahawaha
Kelly	Rigg	Whitmore.
Kerr		

NOES, 20.

Acland	Barnicoat	Bonar
Baillie	Bolt	Bowen

Grace	Pharazyn	Stewart
Jennings	Reynolds	Walker, L.
McLean	Richardson	Whyte
Oliver	Shrimski	Williams.
Ormond	Stevens	

Majority against, 7.

Bill ordered to be read the second time this day three months.

GAMING BILL.

On the motion of the Hon. Mr. MAC-GREGOR, the following members were appointed Managers of the Conference with the House of Representatives on this Bill: The Hon. Mr. MacGregor, the Hon. Mr. Ormond, the Hon. Mr. McLean, the Hon. Captain Morris, the Hon. Mr. Kelly, and the Hon. Mr. Bonar.

The Council adjourned at ten minutes to four o'clock p.m.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.

Thursday, 6th September, 1894.

First Readings—Bills discharged—Sleepers—Government and Municipal Debentures—New Business after Midnight—Marlborough Railway-sleepers—Local Bodies' Loans—Napier Cemetery—Rangitata Settlers—Arundel Village Settlement—Eight Hours Bill—Cape Kidnappers Lighthouse—Vaccination—Adulteration of Food—Grocer, South Dunedin, imprisoned—Christchurch Supreme Court—Volunteer Officers' Decoration—District Judge Kettle—Kaikohe Native Licensing District—Wairau Native Reserves—Moore, Robinson, and Hepburn—Forest Reserves—Licensing Bill—Gaming Bill—Adjournment—Destitute Persons Bill—Rating on Unimproved Value Bill—Lake Forsyth Drainage Bill—Adjournment.

Mr. SPEAKER took the chair at half-past two o'clock p.m.

PRAYERS.

FIRST READINGS.

Guaranteed Banks Amalgamation Prohibition Bill, Inspection of Machinery Bill, Public Reserves Sale Bill.

BILLS DISCHARGED.

Supreme Court Practice and Procedure Bill, Foreign Insurance Companies' Deposits Bill.

SLEEPERS.

On the motion of Mr. MILLS, it was ordered, That a return be prepared by the Railway Department, and laid before this House, showing—(1) The number of sleepers purchased, ordered, or contracted for, in each class of timber; (2) the price paid for sleepers; (3) the locality where they were obtained; (4) the cost of freight paid per sleeper, and the number shipped to different ports—all during the financial year ending 31st March, 1894.

GOVERNMENT AND MUNICIPAL DEBENTURES.

On the motion of Mr. G. HUTCHISON, it was ordered, That a return be laid before this

House giving the particulars (as given in the Return F.-3, Post Office Account) of Government and municipal debentures held on the 31st March last by the Post Office, the Government Insurance Department, and the Public Trust Office.

NEW BUSINESS AFTER MIDNIGHT.

On the minutes of the previous day's sittings being read,

Captain RUSSELL said he wished to raise a question in connection with the minutes. The point he wished to raise was—

Mr. SPEAKER said that unless the honourable gentleman wanted to correct the minutes in some way he did not see how a point could arise. Were the minutes incorrect? It was quite an unusual practice to challenge the minutes.

Captain RUSSELL said there was a minute on the book which went to prove that the third reading of a Bill was taken at a late hour on the previous night. The Standing Orders said that no new business should be undertaken after twelve o'clock at night; but that morning, at seven minutes to two, the third reading of a Bill was put to that House and was carried,—which, he maintained, was in defiance of Standing Orders, and contrary to the ruling which Mr. Speaker himself gave to the House in the year 1887. When the question of the recommitment of a Bill came up for discussion after half-past twelve o'clock Mr. Speaker ruled that the recommitment of a Bill was not new business, but that the reading of a Bill after half-past twelve was new business, unless the Bill was urgent. There was no attempt on the previous night to prove that the Bill was urgent. If the third reading of a Bill were permitted in such circumstances it might be creating a precedent dangerous to the privileges of that House, and therefore he raised the point whether the third reading was a proper entry in the Journals, seeing that it was new business.

Mr. SPEAKER said points of order must be raised at the time, and could not be brought up at a subsequent meeting of the House. That was clearly laid down by the highest authorities. Of course, when points of order arose they were decided. There could be no attempt subsequently to review or reverse the decision of the Deputy-Speaker, any more than the decision of the Chairman of Committees could be appealed against by individual members. Honourable members who desired to call attention to any violation of the Standing Orders must do so at the moment it occurred, and not at a subsequent meeting.

MARLBOROUGH RAILWAY-SLEEPERS.

Mr. MILLS asked the Government, If they will assist small settlers and others in Marlborough by making satisfactory arrangements to purchase birch sleepers from them in small quantities at a reasonable price per sleeper? He had made a similar application last year, and received a favourable reply from the Premier, who said he would consult the Railway Commissioners. Nothing was done in a prac-

tical way to make provision in the matter, and the settlers had only received a stone in reply to the application which they made for bread. They were unable to cut any sleepers in the district on account of the regulations, which were to the effect that they must be delivered in Picton, and that the settlers must pay the cost of freight before the sleepers could be inspected. It was impossible to do this, and the case was an exceptional one, inasmuch as the men were unable to leave their families, as they lived in isolated places. These people had never troubled the Government much in the shape of asking assistance for public works, and he could say that this was a special case, and one the House should deal with so as to let the men who had been splitting sleepers on the Picton Road continue to do so; and he trusted the Premier would give a favourable reply.

Mr. SEDDON said the honourable member was aware that the Government had no control over the Railway Commissioners. Representations had been made to the Commissioners asking them, as far as practicable, to obtain their sleepers in the localities of the railways, as thus employment could be found for the local settlers. He believed it was in the true interests of settlement that this should be done, and that, provided sleepers of a suitable quality could be obtained, they should be obtained locally. He might say that the sections of railway for which sleepers had to be provided during the year were—the Eketahuna-Woodville Railway, which required 60,000 totara sleepers to be obtained from the totara reserves near the line; the Mokau Section, for which 23,000 totara or puriri sleepers were required, and which were likely to be obtained at reasonable prices in the Auckland District; and the Catlin's River Railway, 8,000 sleepers, to be supplied from stock in hand in the South Island. At present there was no Public Works staff in Marlborough, and therefore it would be difficult and expensive to arrange for the purchase of sleepers in small lots from settlers in various parts of the district. He hoped the Railway Commissioners would see their way to get the sleepers from the local settlers, providing the timber and the price were suitable. If it could be done, the settlers should be assisted in the direction indicated.

LOCAL BODIES' LOANS.

Mr. MILLAR asked the Premier, Whether he will this session introduce legislation to confer the necessary powers upon local bodies to convert their loans without compelling each body to go to the expense and trouble of introducing separate Bills into this House? It appeared to him this was one of the most important matters they could possibly deal with. He had no desire to touch upon the greater question of the consolidation of loans; he only asked whether the Government would this session introduce legislation to give the local bodies power to convert their loans without compelling them to get separate Acts passed, which was a very great hardship upon many

bodies at the present time. They could convert loans on much more favourable terms if the necessary machinery were provided. Proper safeguards could be introduced into such legislation as might be deemed necessary to enable the local bodies to deal with the debenture-holders for the purpose of converting the loans.

Mr. SEDDON said this was a very large question, and, first of all, the House ought to know, and the Government ought to know, what amount was involved so far as each district was concerned in regard to these local loans. He could not promise the honourable gentleman anything further at present than that the Government would make inquiry into the matter, and obtain a return. He would suggest to the honourable gentleman that the proper thing to do would be for him to move for a return showing the whole of the local bodies' loans throughout the colony, the amount borrowed, the rates of interest paid, and the sinking fund accrued. With these data in hand the Government and honourable members would be able to deal with the matter in a businesslike way; otherwise it could not be done. It was impossible to say right off that the Government would bring in a measure this session to deal with the question, but inquiries would be made, and on the result of those inquiries would depend what future action, if any, the Government would take.

NAPIER CEMETERY.

Mr. CARNELL asked the Colonial Secretary, If he will cause inquiry as to the administration of the Napier Cemetery, it being freely alleged that the plan of the cemetery is loosely kept, and that confusion has frequently arisen as to the resting-place of bodies and ownership of plots? He had tried to embody in the question all that was necessary, but he might add that he had received letters stating that where a mistake had been made in the plot of ground used for burial purposes disinterments had taken place, which was a most undesirable thing.

Mr. SEDDON said that section 6 of "The Cemeteries Act, 1882," dealt with the question involved. A reply had been sent by the Colonial Secretary, after inquiry, asking for the names of the present trustees of the Napier Cemetery and of the secretary, to which a further answer had been received that the names of the trustees were not known. Under the section of the Act he had referred to the Colonial Secretary could appoint either the Commissioner of Crown Lands, the Stipendiary Magistrate, or the Police Inspector to inspect and report upon a cemetery; and instructions would be given to one of these officers to make the inquiry the honourable member asked for.

RANGITATA SETTLERS.

Mr. MASLIN asked the Minister of Lands, What action the Government are taking in response to the petition of settlers in the Rangitata district asking for a reclassification

of lands rented by them from the Crown? He considered the settlers in this district had a real ground of complaint in respect to the classification of their lands, as these lands had been classified as first-class land owing to their being flat, irrespective of quality. The land occupied by the settlers mentioned was stony land, incapable of improvement with any profit to the settlers themselves, and if they were compelled to make the improvements required on first-class land it was tantamount to throwing the money away, as no return could be got for the money expended. He hoped the Minister would get the land reclassified as second- or third-class land, as the case might be.

Mr. J. MCKENZIE said there was no legal power under the land-laws to enable the Waste Lands Board of Canterbury to reclassify the lands mentioned while the present tenants occupied them. Under the existing classification, he believed there was some hardship in the present case, but the proper course would be to ask the Board to accept a surrender of the leases, and on the lease being surrendered the Board would reclassify the land, and give the settlers the opportunity of taking up the sections under the amended classification.

ARUNDEL VILLAGE SETTLEMENT.

Mr. MASLIN asked the Minister of Lands, When the sum of money promised to open up the roads in the Arundel Village Settlement will be paid over to the Mount Peel Road Board? He wished to remind the Minister that the money promised to the Mount Peel Road Board had not been paid. That promise had been made three or four months ago, and specifications of the works proposed had been prepared by the Board, and the Land Board of Christchurch had approved of the same. The settlers were being put to very considerable inconvenience through the roads not being opened up.

Mr. J. MCKENZIE was happy to tell the honourable member that this money could be paid at any time, if the Board applied for it. An agreement had been entered into between the Board and the Government, but no application had been made for the money. As soon as such application was made the money would be paid.

EIGHT HOURS BILL.

Mr. HALL-JONES asked the Minister of Labour, Whether he proposed to proceed with the Eight Hours Bill this session? They had had on the Order Paper for the past two months an Eight Hours Bill, which had not yet been circulated. The question affected a large number of working-men, especially those employed in the flourmilling industry. In that occupation they worked twelve hours a day, with two breaks for meals; while in the night-shifts the employes worked from six o'clock at night until six o'clock in the morning, without any break at all. He hoped the Government would endeavour to pass the Bill into law this session.

Mr. SEDDON said the Minister of Labour was not present, but he knew his mind upon

Mr. Maslin

this subject, because he had discussed the matter with his colleagues in Cabinet. The Bill had been placed upon the Order Paper with the view of getting it through, if possible, this session. Of course, a great deal depended upon the progress made with the business. He thought honourable members, and more particularly the representatives of labour in the House, would admit that the Government had done very well with regard to labour legislation; but for that, of course, some credit should be given to honourable members on both sides of the House. The matter referred to would be considered later on.

CAPE KIDNAPPERS LIGHTHOUSE.

Mr. CARNELL asked the Government, If they will take into their consideration the urgent necessity for a lighthouse being erected on Cape Kidnappers? During the last week there was very nearly another wreck through want of a light at that point. It had been recommended from time to time, and had been promised by the Marine Department, but nothing had been done. There was a light at Napier which, at very little expense, could be shifted to Cape Kidnappers.

Mr. WARD might say that in 1890 the following positions were said to be those where lighthouses were most urgently required: Cape Palliser; the Kidnappers; East Coast; and Rock Point, near Westport. The total cost of the four was £26,000. He might state that inquiries were being made of shipmasters in order to ascertain which was the most suitable place upon which to have the light erected, and that as soon as that was settled the matter would be proceeded with.

VACCINATION.

Mr. CARNELL asked the Premier, If instructions had been given to the Police Department to issue summonses against all those who have not had their children vaccinated? There seemed to be some doubt whether this was necessary, and the medical profession were divided as to its utility. It was considered by many people a barbarous thing to force people to have their children vaccinated when so very often evil results followed.

Mr. SEDDON said the reply of the Registrar-General was as follows:—

"I do not know of any instructions to the police to take action against persons for not vaccinating their children; and I do not see how any such general instructions could possibly be given to them. The penalties for not complying with 'The Public Health Act, 1876,' in the matter of vaccination are recoverable only upon the information of the Vaccination Inspector of any district (who is the Registrar of Births) or the Public Vaccinator. The police can do nothing except at the instance of the before-mentioned officers. The Vaccination Inspectors do not all enforce vaccination simultaneously, but when neglect or defiance of the law shows that action is necessary in their several districts, then, no doubt, they did their duty."

The following was added:—

"It must be admitted that since the fees have been withdrawn from such Vaccination Inspectors as are officers of the Government (chiefly Postmasters acting as Registrars of Births) the number of vaccinations has declined."

Evidently the fees helped to induce vaccination.

ADULTERATION OF FOOD.

Mr. W. HUTCHISON asked the Minister of Justice, If he will this session introduce an amended Adulteration of Food Act, whereby it shall not be permissible to fine persons for retailing adulterated articles which they have not adulterated? And does he intend, as a matter of simple justice, to remit the somewhat heavy fines and expenses imposed upon certain grocers in Dunedin who have suffered in the manner indicated? It seemed to him self-evident that an amendment of the law in this matter should be granted at once, seeing that persons were punished for offences of which they were not guilty. He need not, however, press that part of the question, because it had been pressed the previous evening with what he could not help regarding as an unfortunate result; but, as to the second part of the question, referring to the remission of fines, perhaps the Premier would be able to tell him that the Government agreed to that.

Mr. SEDDON said instructions had been given to prepare a Bill to provide that the retail dealer might recover from the wholesale dealer who supplied him with the goods the amount of any penalty he might have to pay. No application for a refund had been received except from one firm, and that had been refused.

GROCER, SOUTH DUNEDIN, IMPRISONED.

Mr. W. HUTCHISON asked the Minister of Justice, If he proposes to take any steps to prevent persons failing to pay fines in civil cases being in future committed to prison as criminals, as happened in the recent case of J. Larkins, a grocer, in South Dunedin? This was another question connected with the same subject as the last one: it dealt with a most unwarrantable indignity put upon a respectable citizen, who had been sent to prison as a criminal for the non-payment of a fine; and the fact was that the Adulteration Act, under which he was fined, contained no provision for imprisonment at all. He did not know what reparation could be made to this unfortunate citizen for the indignity he had been subjected to, but he thought it was the duty of the Government to take care that no such thing occurred again under similar circumstances. He would be glad to have an assurance from the Premier to that effect.

Mr. SEDDON said the question of amending the law in the direction indicated was under consideration. The cases were *quasi*-criminal, but it was rarely known that a person was sent to prison for the non-payment of fines in such cases. The question as to whether legislation

was to be provided was under consideration, and he thought the honourable gentleman had himself dealt with it the previous evening by moving an amendment.

CHRISTCHURCH SUPREME COURT.

Mr. COLLINS asked the Premier, Will he place an amount on the supplementary estimates for the erection of a building in connection with the Supreme Court, Christchurch, for the safe-keeping of the valuable library at present occupying a wooden structure? He would like to call the Premier's attention to the fact that the library in connection with the Supreme Court in Christchurch was a very valuable one, and that it was at present housed in a wooden structure very ill adapted for the purpose, ill ventilated, and in every respect, he thought, unfitted for the housing of such a valuable set of books as were comprised in that library. If a small sum could be placed on the estimates for the purpose it would aid in securing the safety of a very valuable set of books. A short time ago a fire had occurred in close proximity to the city library. If a fire were to occur in the vicinity of the Supreme Court this valuable library, containing an irreplaceable set of books, would be in very great danger, as the library was the only portion of the Supreme Courthouse that was of wood. He hoped the Premier would be able to give him a favourable reply.

Mr. SEDDON said he gave the honourable gentleman every credit for endeavouring to induce the Government to make provision for placing the Supreme Court library in a safer building. Some weeks ago the honourable gentleman had brought the subject under his notice, and he had then promised that it should be considered when the Government decided upon the public-works estimates. The honourable gentleman was not alone in his anxiety to know what was to be upon those estimates. As the matter stood, he admitted it was of serious moment; it was now under the consideration of the Government, and, if they could possibly do anything in the direction indicated, all he could say was that they would endeavour to do what was right in the matter.

VOLUNTEER OFFICERS' DECORATION.

Mr. WILLIS asked the Minister of Defence, Why New Zealand Volunteers entitled to it have to pay £1 for the Imperial decoration styled "the Volunteer Officers' Decoration," such charge being entirely without precedent? He might state that a number of Volunteer officers in his district were very much annoyed about this charge of £1 being made for the decoration. They thought that if it was to be given it should be given without any charge, and said, and, he thought, rightly, that it was very humiliating having to pay £1 for a decoration which was given them by the Queen.

Mr. SEDDON said the Volunteer officers' decoration was also without precedent: it was not a medal, but a decoration. In the instructions received from the Colonial Office as to

the conditions of issue, it was stated that a fee of £1 must accompany the recommendation. It was therefore presumed that no Volunteer officers who were entitled to the decoration would object to pay £1. This decoration was granted by Her Majesty to Volunteers in the colony, but it was another question whether the taxpayers of the colony were to pay £1 for the decoration, or the particular officers who were entitled to it. That was the point. This fee was fixed by the Imperial authorities. If the Imperial authorities would grant it free the Government would have very great pleasure in making the presentation, but that was the reason why the fee was charged. Whether the House might be prepared to vote a sum of money for the purpose of paying this fee or not was another question.

DISTRICT JUDGE KETTLE.

Mr. WILLIS asked the Minister of Justice, If it is true that the Government have refused to give District Judge Kettle leave to attend the Petitions Committee in support of his petition, and, if so, why has leave been refused him?

Mr. SEDDON said it was true the Government had informed Judge Kettle that, with the business he had to transact, they did not see their way clear to allow him to come down and throw the business of the Courts and the work out of gear so that he might prosecute a petition in Parliament. This was about the first application of the kind made, and, he thought, the first petition of the kind ever presented. It was so unusual that the Government did not think they were justified in granting Judge Kettle what he asked. On inquiry, he might say, the Government were informed that Judge Kettle had not been summoned by the Committee, and, not having been summoned by the Committee, he was not entitled to attend any more than any other officer in the country. To do what Judge Kettle had done was a most undesirable and dangerous precedent.

KAIKOHE NATIVE LICENSING DISTRICT.

Mr. HEKE asked the Native Minister, Whether Kaikohe, situate in the Bay of Islands and Hokianga Counties, is still a Native licensing district? He would like to say that he had received letters and telegrams from Natives in the district informing him that the Licensing Committee of the Bay of Islands had granted a license for this special district. This license had been granted for a hotel in Rawene, and the Licensing Committee had granted the removal to Kaikohe. The Natives of this district had opposed two or three attempts made by people to have a hotel erected in Kaikohe before, and were successful. He wanted to know whether this district of Kaikohe was a Native licensing district or not, so that the Natives should have strong grounds for opposing this hotel which had been granted by the Licensing Committee.

Mr. SEDDON said he had sent a telegram

Mr. Seddon

inquiring into the position of the matter. He had received a protest from some Natives there, calling attention to the fact that this was a proclaimed district some years ago; but it appeared that under the provisions of the licensing-law application had been made to remove a license. The honourable gentleman knew the Government had no power to interfere with Licensing Committees, or prevent them from performing an administrative act. He did not himself favour the opening of a hotel in a Native district. This was proclaimed a Native district some years ago, but since that, so far as he understood, the boundaries had been altered.

WAIRAU NATIVE RESERVES.

Mr. PARATA asked the Native Minister, Whether he will introduce a clause into the Native Land Court Bill now before this House to enable the Native Land Court to adjudicate upon certain applications for rehearing in respect of certain Native reserves in the Wairau district, South Island, in regard to which applications petitions have been before the Native Affairs Committee and favourably reported upon by that Committee? Several petitions had come before a Committee of the House, and a Committee of the Legislative Council, and both Committees had recommended that there should be a rehearing. He hoped the Government would look into the matter and see whether there were grounds for such inquiry.

Mr. SEDDON said the honourable gentleman was no doubt conversant with the Native Land Court Bill before the House and the Native Affairs Committee. Any amendment necessary would have to be placed in the Bill, and the honourable gentleman would have an opportunity of moving in the matter.

Mr. PARATA asked if the Government would accept such an amending clause.

Mr. SEDDON said that when they had the clause before them they would be able to see what course should be taken. A great deal would depend upon the clause itself.

MOORE, ROBINSON, AND HEPBURN.

Sir R. STOUT asked the Premier, Whether provision will be made in the supplementary estimates for the claims, found valid by the Public Petitions Committee, of the petitioners Messrs. Moore, Robinson, and Hepburn? The honourable gentleman had said about two weeks ago that he would look into the matter, and give a reply. He hoped that reply would be favourable. The Committee had found these persons entitled to certain compensation in consequence of regulations issued by the former Minister of Defence. They were waiting to get their money, as they wished to go into the country and get on to some land. They could in the meanwhile do nothing until they got the money to make a start in life, and he hoped the Government would see their way to have a sum placed on the supplementary estimates.

Mr. SEDDON said there was nothing in

respect to these petitioners' case to cause the Government to depart from the usual course that was followed in respect to petitioners who might receive favourable recommendation from the Committee. The proper course, and the only one the Government could follow, was to give the matter the fullest consideration, and, if it were thought necessary, to place a sum on the supplementary estimates, and, if the House voted the money, to pay it to the petitioners. He might tell the House they were holding over the whole of the petitions until the supplementary estimates were being prepared. He did not himself concur in the amounts recommended by the Committee to be given to some of the petitioners, but the Government were not in a position to say anything definite at present, because the supplementary estimates had not been considered, but he hoped the business would go on, so as to enable them to be considered soon.

FOREST RESERVES.

Mr. MONTGOMERY asked the Minister of Lands, if he will have a map prepared showing the forest reserves in both Islands, and will have the control of them handed over to the local bodies?

Mr. J. MCKENZIE said he believed there was at present in the library a map showing the various forest reserves, up to a certain date. If it was desired, there could be no objection to a map being prepared to show the reserves; but he must say the Government had no intention of handing over the control of these reserves to the local bodies. He was afraid that to do so would be the end of the reserves in a great many cases.

LICENSING BILL.

Mr. McNAB asked the Government, On what day they propose to take the second reading of the Licensing Bill? On Tuesday he had asked, without notice, whether the Bill was to be brought down this week, and he understood from the answer, which was as hurriedly given as the question was asked, that it would not come down this week. He would therefore like to know when it would come on.

Mr. SEDDON said it was impossible to fix a definite date. The policy measures of the Government should, in the interests of the country, have preference. This was a Bill on which honourable members could vote according to their consciences—it was a sort of “go-as-you-please” measure. He did not wish to curtail debate in any way as regarded important Bills that were before the House, but he did say those who wanted this measure might say less on some of the other measures, and that would promote the passing of this Bill. He had thought they might get the other Bills out of the way and go on with this one on Friday night, because next week there were the money Bills.

GAMING BILL.

Sir R. STOUT brought up the report of the Conference on this Bill, which was to the effect

that the Managers had been unable to agree. He now moved, That a message be sent to the Legislative Council stating that, if the amendment made in the Bill (clause 7) be not insisted on, this House would agree to the following new clause:—

“If it be shown to the satisfaction of the Colonial Secretary that, at a representative meeting of the racing-clubs of the colony, a scheme has been considered and approved by the representatives of at least one-half of the clubs which received licenses to use the totalisator during the preceding twelve months, then the Colonial Secretary may approve such scheme and issue licenses in accordance therewith, as provided by section forty-six of ‘The Gaming and Lotteries Act, 1881,’ and by section six of this Act.”

Motion withdrawn; and motion, That Mr. Larnach, Captain Russell, Mr. G. W. Russell, Mr. Houston, Mr. Fraser, and Mr. Seddon be appointed Managers of a fresh Conference, agreed to.

ADJOURNMENT.

8.30. Mr. MILLAR begged to move the adjournment of the House. The reply given by the Premier to his question on the Order Paper with regard to the conversion of local bodies' loans was most unsatisfactory. The Premier appeared to misunderstand the question, or else he tried to lead the House away on a false scent. He had stated, in asking the question, that he did not intend to interfere with the question of the Government taking over the consolidated loans of the local bodies. That was a very large question, which required the serious consideration of the House. What he asked the Premier to do was to introduce a short Bill with a machinery clause sufficient to enable any local body to negotiate with the debenture-holders to convert the debentures, without the expense of bringing in separate Bills for the purpose. A Bill had been brought down and carried through the House to enable the City of Dunedin to convert their loans. He wanted to know if that conferred any liability on the colony. They had already passed through a banking Bill to confer liability on the colony; but what he asked now was that the Premier would bring in a Bill to enable the local bodies to convert their loans as he had stated. He knew the Premier was always ready to do what he could to reduce the matter of interest payable by local bodies; and, if they sat there until Christmas, they should endeavour to put so important a measure as this through. He asked any honourable member to cast his eye over the orders of the day and say if there was any order that might not well be discharged to deal with such a question as this. If such a measure were brought down he felt sure it would meet with little or no opposition. The Premier had stated that it would be necessary for him to find out the total amount of debt of the local bodies. That had nothing to do with it. He was not dealing with the total debt. What he had asked the Government had

to do with the debts of the different local bodies. It was simply to bring in a Bill to confer upon local bodies the necessary powers to deal with separate conversions. That had already been done in the case of Dunedin. If the Premier would bring down a general measure to enable any local body to do this, it would meet the whole case, and there would be no liability on the part of the colony. If the Premier looked at this question in the way he (Mr. Millar) regarded it, he would at once comply with his request. Some of the local bodies paid 7 per cent., and some of them as much as 8 per cent., for their loans, and if the Premier brought in a Bill these bodies would immediately set about converting their loans. By that means eighteen months' time would be saved; besides which, the time of the country would be saved, because he had no doubt that next session members would, one after another, be bringing in separate Bills, whereas a general Bill would save all that trouble and expense, and the time of the country. He hoped the Premier would see his way to introduce a Bill of this sort. They were talking of cheap-money schemes, and here was a scheme that would bring about cheap money. It would reduce the rates of people in boroughs and counties the local governing bodies of which took advantage of such a Bill. He was sure the country members would thoroughly approve of any such measure as that.

Mr. G. W. RUSSELL said he entirely sympathized with the remarks of the honourable member for Chalmers. Take one case in Canterbury which would be very familiar to members—he referred to the Christchurch Drainage Board. That was a body which borrowed no less than £200,000 at the ruinous rate of 6 per cent.; and, in addition to that, the Board had to provide a sinking fund. The result was that the burden of taxation necessary to raise the amount for interest and sinking fund was absolutely intolerable, and, so far as Riccarton, Avon, and other parts surrounding Christchurch were concerned, there had been no drainage effected whatever, and those districts were rated now to help to pay the interest because the city itself was already rated to the maximum. It appeared to him that if the Government would introduce a short Bill such as that sketched by the honourable member for Chalmers the whole of Christchurch and its suburbs might receive an enormous relief from the oppressive taxation now levied upon them in connection with the Drainage Board. The unfortunate tendency of recent legislation in that House was to compel the House to deal with merely parish matters, and a great deal of the time of the House was taken up by questions which had no business to be discussed there at all. The proposal would have the effect of creating the machinery by which these matters could be settled by the localities themselves,—always, of course, subject to the approval of the Government. He understood that was what the proposal of the honourable member for Chalmers was. That was a perfectly fair proposal, and one there should be

Mr. Millar

no objection to. When they thought of the Riverton Harbour Board Bill being forced through, and rammed down the throats of honourable members, then, to say that such a question as this—

Hon. MEMBERS.—The Upper House has thrown it out.

Mr. G. W. RUSSELL said he had nothing to do with what the Upper House had done. His honourable friends told him the Upper House had killed it, but he had nothing to do with that. What he had got to do with was the time that had been wasted in this House in connection with that matter; and when matters like that had been forced through the House, then for the Government to tell them they had no time to take up this important question, which would give immense relief to ratepayers throughout the country, was playing with the House and the country.

Mr. W. HUTCHISON had a word to say about the adulteration question. He was sorry the Premier had not realised the gravity of the situation at all. It was an axiom in British law that an injustice done to one single citizen was an injustice to the whole community, and here a number of citizens had been very cruelly used. He understood the Premier now said a Bill would be introduced to remedy the evil complained of. It could have been done the previous night if the Premier or the House had been in the humour to do it, but such a complexion was given to the resolution which he introduced that nothing would be listened to. It should have commended itself to the common-sense of the Committee, but did not. As to the further question he asked, about the remission of fines, the Premier said an application had been made for the remission of one fine, and it had not been granted. He was sorry to hear it. Now, he wanted to bring under the notice of the House the circumstances under which these persons were fined. There seemed to be some doubt as to whether they possibly could be fined if they did not know that they committed the offence; but there was no doubt about it. Here was the particular clause under which they were fined—the latter part of clause 5 of the Adulteration Act of 1880. The first part of the clause was not to be read with the latter part. He wished honourable members to understand that. These were the words of the clause under which these persons were fined: "Every person who shall sell as unadulterated any article of food or any drug which is adulterated shall, on conviction, for every such offence be liable to a penalty not exceeding ten pounds." They did sell these adulterated articles as unadulterated, but they did so in ignorance of the fact, and there was no exemption for ignorance.

Sir R. STOUT.—They sold them as unadulterated.

Mr. W. HUTCHISON said they sold them as unadulterated articles, believing they were unadulterated, and they were ready to prove they bought them believing them to be unadulterated, and paid an unadulterated price; and

surely that was a position of things that ought not to exist. He felt surprised that the Premier was not anxious and ready, as he usually was, to remedy a grievance of this sort. What was Government for but to remedy injustice done to the citizens? Yet the whole thing was treated as if it were of no consequence whatever. Then, with reference to the second case, the case of a man who not only had a fine imposed upon him, but was sent to prison for the non-payment of that fine, he wished to observe, in the first place, that there was no imprisonment at all connected with the Adulteration Act. There was no power to imprison given to the Magistrate at all.

Mr. BELL.—It is in the Justices of the Peace Act.

Mr. W. HUTCHISON said, Yes, it was there, but this case was brought under the Adulteration Act; and, under the Act in virtue of which these persons were fined, there was no power of imprisonment, and the Magistrate did not add any alternative to the fine. He simply fined these persons. This particular man did not pay the fine. He thought he could not do better than give the particulars of the case. For the benefit of honourable members he would read the narrative of the case as given by the Stipendiary Magistrate. There was no denying that the articles were adulterated, and there was no desire that persons should not be punished for selling such articles if they knew they were adulterated. He did not stand there to shield crime, but to protect innocence. Here was what the Stipendiary Magistrate said of the case:—

"Referring to your telegram of the 25th August, 1894, I have the honour to state that Alfred James Larking, grocer, of South Dunedin, was charged, on the 26th April last, on information by the Inspector of Weights and Measures, with selling as unadulterated a certain drug—to wit, cream of tartar—which, in fact, was adulterated. Mr. J. F. M. Fraser appeared for the defendant, who pleaded Guilty, whereupon I sentenced him to pay a fine of £1 and costs, which came to £2 3s. The charge was brought under the latter portion of section 5 of 'The Adulteration Prevention Act, 1880,' which makes no provision for imprisonment in case of default; therefore I made no order of imprisonment, nor had I the power to do so, the enforcement of payment having to be left to the general provision in such cases under sections 91 to 97 of 'The Justices of the Peace Act, 1882.' My connection with the case ended here, but Mr. Ralfe informs me that as the defendant did not pay the fine he first caused a notice to be served upon him demanding payment, and subsequently caused Sergeant Brown to call upon the defendant on several occasions to point out to him the consequences that must follow if he did not pay the money. As these cautions had no effect, Mr. Alexander Thompson, a Justice of the Peace, who was at the office of the Police Court on the 9th June, issued a warrant of distress to recover the fine and costs, and, as the amount was not recovered, the same Justice, on

July 20, 1894, issued a warrant of commitment in default of distress, and fixed the term of imprisonment at seven days' hard labour, which would have ceased at any time on payment of the fine and costs. The proceedings appear to have been regular in every respect, excepting that there was unusual delay in issuing the warrant of imprisonment. Mr. Gaoler Phillips informs me that Larking was brought to the gaol about the 4th August, and was put in prison clothes as a hard-labour prisoner, in accordance with the prison regulations; but instead of putting him to work with the ordinary prisoners, to which he was liable, he was set to work by himself in his cell in cleaning oakum which had been already picked, and is light work."

In consequence of this warrant, this person was taken to gaol, stripped, washed—

Mr. BELL.—Served him right.

Mr. W. HUTCHISON said the honourable gentleman said, "Served him right." Would that honourable gentleman say that it served him right if he himself were treated in that way? It was terribly bad form in him. He did not see why, because this was a poor man, he should be treated in a way different from that accorded to a rich man, such as the honourable gentleman was. At all events, this man was guilty of no offence that could make him anything beyond a first-class misdemeanant. He stated that on as high an authority as the honourable member for Wellington City (Mr. Bell).

Mr. BELL.—He could sue for false imprisonment.

Mr. W. HUTCHISON said if the honourable gentleman were there, and would take up the case, he might do that.

Mr. BELL.—It is quite right.

Mr. W. HUTCHISON said it was quite wrong. To send an unoffending person to gaol, not as a debtor, but as a criminal, was to outrage all justice. It would be a most desirable thing if that House, standing up in the interests of justice to poor people, would take means to indicate that it was opposed to an unwarrantable course of that kind. The liberty of the subject was the most important thing they could deal with, although it apparently seemed a small matter where a poor man was concerned. This man was no criminal, and had no right to be subjected to criminal treatment.

Mr. G. J. SMITH, on the general question of adjournment, wished to say that it seemed to him that in regard to a good many of the questions put this session the replies were very unsatisfactory. If there seemed to be any question that required a careful answer, and some consideration, that question was always fenced, and, as far as he remembered, the honourable gentleman who put it had as much light after the question was answered as he had before. With reference to this question of conversion, he thought the honourable member for Chalmers deserved the thanks of the House for bringing this matter up. Only the other day, as the honourable gentleman pointed out, they

had the Dunedin Loans Conversion Bill introduced and passed through the House. That Bill would grant a considerable measure of relief to the City of Dunedin, and would place their finances on a much better basis than they had been on for some time. If that was so, if the measure was a good one for Dunedin, he did not see why a general measure should not be introduced in the interests of the whole colony. If conversion was good for Government loans, it ought also to be good for the loans of local bodies. As had been pointed out by the honourable member for Riccarton, they had in Christchurch and its suburbs a corporate body known as the Drainage Board, and this body was in a state of practical bankruptcy.

4.0. It had got up to the highest rating-power, and the burden had become very heavy. If some general scheme of conversion were introduced and passed that body would get a large amount of relief,—relief that would be felt by the citizens of Christchurch and suburbs. He could not understand why it would be necessary for the local bodies to introduce separate Bills of this nature, which were admittedly good Bills. The fact of the Dunedin Bill having gone through so unanimously showed that the House approved of its principle, and, that being so, it seemed to him that a general Bill, having a very much wider application, would do much more good. In regard to the reply given by the Premier on the question relating to the Licensing Bill, he did not wish to say anything embarrassing to the Government, but he had been under the impression that the Bill referred to was one of the policy Bills of the Government referred to in the Speech from the Throne. It had been high up on the Order Paper, but it was now some distance down, while the Lake Forsyth Bill had been discussed and passed. In comparison with the Licensing Bill, however, that Bill was of no interest to the public, and he could not understand why the second reading of the first-mentioned Bill should not be taken, and the Bill at once pushed on. It would, no doubt, take some little time to debate and to pass it through Committee, and it seemed to him that it was just possible that there was some foundation for the rumours that were about as to the intentions of the Government in regard to the Bill. He hoped, if the Premier spoke on this motion, that he would give the House an assurance that the Licensing Bill, being a policy Bill, would be brought down at once, and a genuine attempt made to get it through the House.

Mr. THOMPSON presumed that the honourable member for Christchurch City (Mr. G. J. Smith) had come into the House under the impression that he was going to reform the world, and consequently he regarded the Licensing Bill as of such importance that the House should spend a fortnight in discussing it; but he did not think the Premier was likely to allow his hands to be forced in reference to that Bill or any other Bill. In regard to the conversion scheme, that also was a scheme which the honourable member for Chal-

mers seemed to think could be taken up at a moment's notice; but that honourable gentleman would find, if he paid a little more attention to the matter, that it was a very big question for any Government to take up at a moment's notice, especially at this late stage of the session; and it was too much to expect them to do so. It would be far better that such a scheme should be dealt with when the whole question of local government was dealt with. He would impress upon the House that, if honourable members would insist upon the Government dealing with the question of local government, the Government would have to deal with it, and he was prepared to take his part in getting that question discussed. He did not mean to say that it could be done this session; but questions of that kind should not be dealt with piecemeal. In regard to the remarks of the honourable member for Dunedin City (Mr. W. Hutchison) about the "poor man" business, that honourable gentleman was very fond of trotting out the poor man. He had large sympathies towards him, and was always ready to go to his relief. He understood that the "poor man" who had refused to pay the fine of £1 was a well-to-do grocer in Dunedin, and yet he was trotted out as a poor man. If that was the class of "poor man" they were to hear so much about, the sooner members ceased talking about the wrongs of the poor man the better it would be. He admitted that there might be a grievance in this case, and the law should be altered so as to get at the wholesale houses that sold this drug. If the grocer was to be punished for retailing the adulterated drug, then the wholesale firm who supplied it in the first instance should also be punished; but, simply because the man had refused to pay a small fine, he had no right to come to the House and claim the sympathy of honourable members. The proper course would have been for him to have paid the fine, and then to have petitioned the House for redress.

Mr. W. HUTCHISON said it was not because the man was a poor man that he had appealed, but because he had been treated as a criminal.

Mr. THOMPSON thought some inquiry should be made in the matter, and, if the law were found to be such that a wholesale house was permitted to sell adulterated drugs, then it should be amended. It had been stated as correct that this grocer had bought the drug from a wholesale house believing it to be unadulterated, and the law should be such that they should be equally liable to punishment.

Mr. BELL.—So they are.

Mr. THOMPSON considered, if the law were such that the wholesale house who sold the drug was equally liable, then the police authorities should have proceeded against the wholesale man. If that would be the result of the matter having been brought before the House, then the honourable gentleman had done some service; but he must protest against the continual trotting-out of men who were in good circumstances, and were prosperous tradesmen, as poor men.

Mr. G. J. Smith

Mr. SEDDON had been surprised, on coming into the House, to hear that the replies given to questions asked that day had not been considered satisfactory. Taking the question of loan-conversions, he supposed there was involved in that question a matter of about thirty millions. The indebtedness of local bodies amounted to between twenty and thirty millions.

An Hon. MEMBER.—Six millions.

Mr. SEDDON said the honourable gentleman forgot the loans to local bodies, and the money borrowed from the Government under the Roads and Bridges Construction Act, and other moneys borrowed from the several Government institutions. Besides, there were the overdrafts also to be included.

An Hon. MEMBER.—They are converted.

Mr. SEDDON said that all of them were not converted. He had been pleased to find honourable members taking such interest in the question, but he could not have given any other reply to the honourable member for Chalmers than he had given. Probably had it not been for the success that had attended the Bill brought in for Dunedin the House would not have heard a word about the matter. On account of the successful passing of that measure, the Government were asked constantly whether they were prepared to do the same for all local bodies. It was a question of such magnitude that the Government should know what they were doing, and where they were going to end. If they took the New Plymouth, Gisborne, Napier, Westport, and Greymouth Harbour Boards, and said that they should be given power to convert the whole of their loans, the honourable member for Chalmers would be the first to turn round and rend the Government for proposing it. The honourable gentleman had said that the Government gave no reply, but he might have told him straight out that this session the Government could not bring down a Bill, and would he have been any better satisfied? He had suggested to the honourable gentleman that he should ask for a return, and he could not have done more for him than he did. With regard to the reply which had been given to the question of the honourable member for Dunedin City (Mr. W. Hutchison), as regarded the first part of that question, he had been placed at a disadvantage, owing to the absence, through illness, of his colleague. He had given the departmental reply to the question, and under the circumstances he thought it was a fair one. With regard to the other question of the honourable gentleman, as to the intentions of the Government in regard to the introduction of an amended Adulteration of Food Act, he had informed him that the matter was under consideration. The honourable gentleman had himself moved in the matter on the previous evening by proposing an amendment in the Bill then before the House, to which the House gave a very decided answer. There must be responsibility somewhere in reference to the question of adulteration; and, as to getting at the wholesale merchants who disposed of adul-

terated articles, he thought he expressed the voice of the House upon the matter by saying that those wholesale houses which distributed such stuff should be punished just the same as the person who distributed it to the consumer. Both ought to be responsible. The honourable member for Wellington City had pointed out the position of the law, and there had been no complaint that in the instance mentioned there had been any maladministration in carrying out the law. It had not been suggested that the Resident Magistrate, in inflicting the penalty, had acted contrary to the law; that point had never been raised, and he must take it for granted that the Magistrate was within the law when he inflicted the penalty. A man who took up a stand against the law, and said he was not going to pay—if he would do such a stupid thing, then the honourable member could not blame the Government. There had been nothing alleged against the police in connection with the matter. If there was a member of the community who would set himself up against the law, and who would not abide by the decision of the Court, but would have that stigma cast upon himself and his family sooner than pay a fine, then, if the law was to be obeyed—if it was to be effective—there was no course to adopt but for the authorities to see that the law was complied with. The punishment inflicted was no reflection upon the law, the administration of the law, or the Government. He was sorry that any respectable member of the community should have placed himself in that position; but, when the Government had said that the matter was under consideration, and that they would be prepared to deal with it as it should be dealt with, by making all parties who they thought violated the law punishable, he thought nothing further could be said. Coming to another question, that regarding the Order Paper. The Government had from day to day to fix the Order Paper as they believed to be in the interests of the business of the House and of the country, and if members had only gone through the business on the Order Paper for each day they would have had the Licensing Bill through a week ago. He must say he was astonished to find that they were making such slow progress. They had practically done nothing yesterday, for there was no business in merely answering questions, and the Bills dealt with had been Bills which had come down from the Legislative Council that he thought would not have taken more than half an hour to put through.

Sir R. STOUT said it was the Premier's own amendment.

Mr. SEDDON said that such was not the case. It was the amendment of the honourable member for Caversham. Then, with regard to the Designation of Districts Bill, there was practically no amendment there at all. As to the Licensing Bill and its position on the Order Paper, he might say the Government was desirous of getting the second reading of that Bill. It had not lost its position on the Order Paper, but was in a good position now,

and those who desired sincerely to see it read should assist the Government to get the policy Bills which were ahead of it out of the way, so that they could bring it up for consideration. The course now adopted was not really pushing the Bill ahead, but was really retarding it. The afternoon was almost gone, and he hoped members would see that it was in the interests of the country that they should get on with the Bills on the Order Paper, and get some practical work done.

Mr. T. MACKENZIE wished to show to what extent they could rely upon a Ministerial statement. The honourable gentleman a moment ago had told the House that this question involved a matter of thirty millions of money. Fortunately, the total indebtedness of the local bodies was set forth in the Journals of the House, which even the Premier himself would not dare to trifle with. Now, the entire indebtedness of all the local bodies in New Zealand—Harbour Boards, boroughs, counties, town districts, and all—amounted to £6,668,000.

Mr. SEDDON said that did not include the loans under the Roads and Bridges Construction Act at all.

Mr. T. MACKENZIE.—Everything is shown to be included.

Mr. BELL wished to protest against an honourable gentleman being allowed to put on record the statement that for fines imposed in civil cases a man had been sent to gaol. He would like to know whether the House was willing to agree with the statement that a person brought before the Magistrate charged with selling adulterated food, and convicted, was guilty merely of a breach of a civil engagement. As a matter of fact, the Legislature had taken care to make it a criminal process. What was very curious was that the man had pleaded Guilty, and yet the honourable gentleman said he had pleaded Guilty in a civil case. If any one who was guilty defied the law, refused to pay the fine, or refused to allow anything to be got under the warrant of distress which stood between him and imprisonment, then the Magistrate was no more to blame for sending him to gaol than was any honourable member in that House. The man refused to pay the fine, and, distress and poverty not being pleadable, the Magistrate had to issue a warrant. True the Magistrate might have issued a warrant without imposing hard labour; but was it to be said that, when a man was guilty of a charge of adulteration and refused to pay a fine and was therefore sent to gaol, he was not to be sentenced to hard labour? If that was so, there would be few penalties recovered. His object was to protest against the statement which had been put upon the Order Paper, and would get into *Hansard*—that a man had been fined in New Zealand in a civil case, and had been imprisoned, when, in fact, it was a criminal procedure.

Dr. NEWMAN was really surprised at the Premier pretending that the answers given were satisfactory. He had himself often a burning desire to ask for information, but he did not put questions because the Premier

always evaded them. There was really nothing in this game of cross-questions and crooked answers—for the answers were certainly not satisfactory. He did think the Premier, even if the Order Paper was clogged with work, should promise during the recess to prepare a Bill for the conversion of loans, for that would be of great convenience to a number of local bodies besides Port Chalmers.

Mr. SEDDON said he was asked to do that this session, and it was impossible.

Dr. NEWMAN did not see that that was impossible. The Premier had given notice just now of nine or ten Bills, and his colleague had given notice of one or two more, so there was no reason why there should not be one extra. The fact was, the Colonial Treasurer converted everything he could lay his hands on—he was always converting. No, this Government was not like the Scotchman. The Scotchman kept the Ten Commandments and everything else upon which he could lay his hands, but this Government kept everything they could lay their hands on except the Ten Commandments. The Colonial Treasurer converted loans on every possible occasion, and he looked round for the applause of the House, applause which the House always gave when he said that he had done a great thing for the country, and had saved the country so much interest, by his conversion operations. But when the honourable member for Chalmers asked that they should convert the local bodies' loans the Treasurer did not see anything in it, but pooh-poohed it, and said there was so much to be done. As a matter of fact, the amount to be converted was not nearly the enormous amount that had been mentioned, for a great many of the loans had not ripened, and when they were new there was nothing gained by their conversion; so that not all of the £6,000,000, much less of the £30,000,000, could be converted. Probably only £1,000,000 or £2,000,000 should be converted. Wellington would be the better for having its loans converted, Dunedin would be the same; and, as they had a Rating Bill general in its application, he thought they should have a Conversion Bill which also should have general application. Then, with regard to the cross-questions and crooked answers, look at what the Premier's answer had been to the Northern Maori member about the publichouse business. There they had a Native district in which no publichouse could be allowed, and the member asked why a new publichouse was allowed in the district, and the Premier said, "Oh, the Act does it." And then he said the boundaries were altered, and that the publichouse might now be settled in the district.

Mr. SEDDON said he had said nothing of the sort.

Dr. NEWMAN took it that the Premier said this was a Native district, and that the boundaries had been altered, and that therefore probably the publichouse could be shifted to it.

Mr. SEDDON said his reply had been that in 1867 the district in question was a Native district, but whether the boundaries had been

Mr. Seddon

altered or not he did not know, but he had sent a telegram to make inquiries, and when he found out how the matter stood then the Government would deal with it.

Dr. NEWMAN was glad to hear the Government would deal with it; but he would point out that it was the honourable gentleman's own Bill of last year that allowed a public-house to be shifted from one place to another miles away.

Mr. SEDDON said it was no part of his Bill of last year, but it was in the original Licensing Bill, and had been one of the matters that had been overlooked. It had not been altered at all last year.

Dr. NEWMAN was glad to hear that, but did not think it was altered this year. As to whether the Licensing Bill should come on or not, it seemed to him the Premier was hardly fair in accusing the House of delay. As a matter of fact, the Opposition had helped in every way; there never had been an Opposition that had given a Ministry so much help. This was one of the most silent Oppositions, and they had helped the Premier at the beginning of the session to curtail the debate down to a beggarly half-hour, and had taken away opportunities for moving the adjournment of the House.

Mr. SEDDON said that ten had spoken at the previous sitting on a point of order.

Dr. NEWMAN thought that was quite right. Did the Ministers suppose that they were to speak and that every one else was to keep silence? They saw the Whips go round to the other side, stopping honourable members from talking, and then the Premier and the Colonial Treasurer would get up and talk by the hour. The attitude on the Government side of the House clearly was that members should sit still and listen to the great words of the Ministers.

Mr. G. W. RUSSELL.—Talk about your own side.

Dr. NEWMAN knew the honourable member for Riccarton did not like to be gagged. The left wing was a power that would make itself heard, and he thought it would make itself felt. Any way, it had made a good start. As a matter of fact, the talking in Parliament was not nearly as bad as it used to be: but the Government would bring down such a lot of measures. If they left out some of the measures that were on the Order Paper, and submitted to the House those they wanted to pass, they would find less difficulty in pushing business through.

Mr. EARNSHAW said he had not expected any answer to be given to the honourable member for Dunedin City (Mr. W. Hutchison) other than the one he got; but he wished to controvert a statement that had been made by the honourable member for Wellington City (Mr. Bell), that this man had pleaded Guilty. The man had not pleaded Guilty.

Mr. BELL wished to be allowed to explain. The honourable member for Dunedin City (Mr. W. Hutchison) had read the statement of the Magistrate, in which the Magistrate said the defendant had pleaded Guilty.

Mr. EARNSHAW was going to explain that the defendant did not plead Guilty, but that his lawyer did. He had a letter from Mr. Larking which, he thought, put the matter very clearly. He must say that a gross injustice had been done to this man, who had had no intention of evading the law, who had always been a good citizen, and who had never previously been before the Court. He had only been technically guilty, for he had only sold an article of ordinary commerce; and yet he had been sent to gaol and had been sentenced to hard labour and to herd with felons. That, surely, was a case of great hardship. If a man would not pay a fine without reasons, why, they could not help it, he must go to gaol; but that was no reason why he should have hard labour and these indignities put upon him. The following was the letter:—

“28th August, 1894.

“DEAR SIR,— . . . I do not know whether you have all the particulars of the cases. I wrote a letter to the *Star* explaining my position. What I complain of is this: Why are two men fined and one let off, all for the same offence? If the authorities knew these goods were being circulated, why did they not strike at the fountain-head, not go and pick two or three out for an example? I will guarantee these goods are to be found in every shop in Dunedin and suburbs—in fact, all through the country. The lawyer I employed, I consider, made a mistake in withdrawing my plea of ‘Not guilty.’ He had no instructions from me to do so; but you know, when you put your affairs in the hands of counsel, your mouth is shut. You see they charged me, in the first place, with selling an article of food—to wit, cream of tartar—adulterated with starch, and I was fined £1, and costs, £2 3s. Well, on the following week they found that cream of tartar was not an article of food, but a drug, and my lawyer allows them to alter the words ‘article of food’ to ‘drug’ on the information; and then they fined me £1, and costs, £2 3s. I contend this was illegal. In Wardell Brothers’ case their lawyer refused to let them alter the word from ‘article of food’ to ‘drug,’ so their case was dismissed. Mr. Haggitt stated in Court at the time that he would lay a fresh information under the Drug Act, but up to the present this has not been done. Surely there is something wrong here. I offered to pay my fine by instalments, sooner than go to gaol, but they would not take it, and from the state of my trade just now I was obliged to go to gaol. It seems to me, whoever is pulling the strings in Dunedin, is just trying to drive men out of the place. What with loss of shipping trade and other things combined, things are quite bad enough down here, without harassing men about like this. What I should like to know is, if there is any way that I can get redress for the imprisonment I have suffered. It is a strange way to serve old colonists. I first put my foot in Dunedin thirty-five years ago, and this is the finish. Thanking you kindly for any trouble you take in the matter,—Yours, &c.,

“A. J. LARKING, Kew.”

4.30. It was something very wrong—when a man could prove he was too poor to pay a fine all at once, but was prepared to pay by instalments—that he should be sent to gaol to herd with criminals. This was a very improper state of things, especially if the man had not sanctioned his lawyer's pleading Guilty, and when a charge brought against another firm for doing the same thing had not been carried out. Wardell Brothers should have been put in the same position. The Minister, or those acting for him while he was incapable of attending to business, did not deal fairly in this case. If the Government wished to see the Adulteration Act carried out in its integrity they should send their Inspector to make out a case against the shops throughout the country, or else take a test case into Court, and, if they got a conviction, let it be a warning to the trade; but to press on traders who were simply selling normal articles, such as cream of tartar and mustard, which it was admitted were not adulterated in the colony, but were imported, was very improper. It was very improper that such a trader should be sent to gaol for no misconduct of his own, but simply for carrying out legitimate trade in the ordinary course. The case was a scandal, and did not reflect credit on the Government. He felt very strongly on the subject, and thought the man was suffering under a strong sense of injustice. He would have expected the great Liberal Government, and the great Liberal party, which laid down as one of its planks to care for the working-class and those who had not this world's goods behind them, to meet the case in a different manner. With regard to the Licensing Bill, he regretted that such an evasive answer had been given by the Premier. If any one had read carefully what he had said with regard to the policy measures before the House, and what he had said the other day,—that he hoped to get the Licensing Bill through its second reading and sent to the Statutes Revision Committee,—it was evident that, so far as that Bill was concerned this year, it was as dead as a door-nail. There was no doubt the Government did not mean to deal with it this session unless they were forced by the House. They could shove it about the Order Paper as they liked, and it was evident that the House would not have an opportunity of dealing with it, unless those members who had been returned by the temperance people, or largely so, were determined that the Government must take up the Bill. If they took up that attitude the Bill might be got through.

Mr. CROWTHER was well pleased that the great Liberal Government were not making fish of one and flesh of another. It was quite clear that they had courage enough to insist on carrying out the law, even in regard to one of the very genteel poor in Dunedin, where it seemed there was a great collection of a similar class. Why did this man not pay his fine? Why did he not lodge a complaint with the police against the individual who sold him the article? A prosecution would have followed, and he would have been relieved from

the responsibility, and from the soreness that followed after. He was not going to say much on that question, because he believed the best thing had been done. If they were to have laws it was no use to defy them. But, with regard to this question of loan-conversion, the Dunedin authorities had converted some of their loans, and why could not every other city do the same business on its own account? As representative of a large city constituency, he strongly objected to the Government beginning to handle their private business. They were able to do it themselves; and, if there was one thing more than another that Corporations objected to, it was this or any other Government beginning to manage their private affairs. The Dunedin conversion had been conducted without any cost, and if they were to ask the Government to do it there would be a lot of red-tape; they would know the beginning, but would very seldom know the end. He was pleased that the Dunedin business had been such a success; he had helped it all he could, as he would every other conducted on similar lines—but not through the Government.

Mr. HOGG said the honourable member for Dunedin City (Mr. Earnshaw) was in the habit of sneering very loudly against the great Liberal Government and the great Liberal party. He thought, if that honourable gentleman looked back for a period of only a few months, he would see that it was due to that Government and party that he was able to fill the position he now occupied. But, if he was able to dispense with it, and with the party with which not so long ago he was closely identified, he could assure him both the Government and the party could dispense with his services and assistance. The honourable gentleman belonged to a political tricycle, the centre wheel of which was the senior member for Wellington City, and the two hind wheels were the honourable member for Christchurch City (Mr. G. J. Smith) and the honourable member for Dunedin City (Mr. Earnshaw). It was generally found that when one rose to assail the Government he was followed by the other two barking at his heels. With regard to the question that had been raised about the punishment of an unfortunate Dunedin storekeeper for selling adulterated food or drugs, the floor of the House was not the proper arena for attacking the administrators of the law. It had not been asserted that the Magistrate who inflicted the penalty had done anything more than he was bound to do in the discharge of his duty. The duty of a Resident Magistrate, as well as of a Justice, was frequently painful and unpleasant; and so far from honourable members attempting to find fault with those who had to discharge these duties—not that they liked to inflict punishment, but simply that they were bound to discharge their duties fairly and honestly—it was incumbent upon law-abiding citizens and members of that House to rather defend them in the discharge of their functions than to attempt to criticize their actions. A Magistrate was

Mr. Earnshaw

bound, if he carried out the law at all, to protect the public; he had to protect the health, life, and property of the public; and in the present instance, so far as they could learn, the Magistrate in Dunedin did no more than his duty in attempting to put down the sale of adulterated articles. He (Mr. Hogg) was only sorry this was not more frequently done, because he believed the public health should be protected, and the public should be protected from plunder. In regard to this case, what did they find? They found that a storekeeper, who was not by any means the poor man that was represented by some honourable gentlemen, but a man in business, was brought up for a contravention of the law, and found guilty of it, and a penalty that, on the whole, seemed very lenient was inflicted; and because he was so contumacious as to defy the law, and say the fine would not be paid, he was imprisoned. What could be done? The law must be upheld, and the only way to uphold it was by punishing the man who had broken it. He was really astonished and pained to think that honourable members should bring the case forward as if it were the case of an unfortunate man unable to pay a fine who had been sent to gaol, when they knew very well it was the case of a man breaking the law, and defying the law of the country—a thing which very few honest men would care to do. Then, the action of the Magistrate was questioned because he chose to protect the public against fraud; for whether the retailer of the article was the adulterator or not, if the article he was selling, which was supposed to be pure, happened to be adulterated, the consumer was defrauded. It mattered not on whose back ultimately the fraud lay, the only way to put it down was by getting at the retailer. If the wholesale merchant supplied him with an adulterated article the retailer had his remedy. To treat the matter in this way was simply wasting time.

Sir R. STOUT.—Hear, hear.

Mr. HOGG was glad to hear the honourable member for Wellington City say "Hear, hear," because there was no one who wasted more time. There was not a Bill brought down by the Government but what the honourable gentleman said was badly drafted. If the Government wished to prosecute their business within a reasonable time there was one remedy they would have to resort to, and that was to appoint the honourable gentleman as their draftsman; because, according to that honourable gentleman, the man who was doing the work at present was utterly incompetent. Then, with regard to the question of converting these loans, he thought it was a very formidable question indeed. Instead of converting these loans, he thought the best thing the local bodies could do was to redeem them as rapidly as possible. The loans of this colony were far too heavy, and if the loans were to be converted at all the matter would require a great deal of consideration, not only at the hands of the Government, but by the people of the colony generally. If the colony was to be held responsible

in any way for the obligations of local bodies, he thought, before any such measure as was suggested was seriously entertained, it should receive the very serious consideration of the country at large.

Mr. EARNSHAW wished to make a personal explanation with regard to what the honourable member for Masterton had said about him (Mr. Earnshaw) and the Government at the elections. All he could say was that if there was a candidate in 1890 who had to fight his own battle at the general election it was himself. At the last election the Government were opposed to him, and it was quite notorious in Dunedin that when the Premier went down there he had intended to address the public and to speak against him, but he was advised not to do so by his friends.

Mr. J. MCKENZIE said this was a personal explanation. It seemed to him that every speech made in the House lately was under the cover of personal explanation.

Mr. MORRISON did not agree with the honourable gentleman who preceded him in his remarks on this local-government question. He was sure most members in the House would agree with him when he said they owed a debt of gratitude to the honourable member for Chalmers for introducing this question. It affected the whole of the local bodies in the colony. They had borrowed money in the past at high rates of interest, and all they now asked was that the Government would bring down a machinery measure to enable the local bodies to convert, or endeavour to make better terms with the people from whom they had borrowed. The interest they were paying was at the rate of from 6 to 8 per cent., while at present money could be got at 4, or at the outside 5 per cent. Of course the Government was perfectly justified in seeing that no injustice was done by assisting any of these local bodies—nothing that would have the effect of placing extra burdens on the State. He for one would not agree to anything in that direction. But he would point out the strong necessity there was for granting this aid to the local bodies, and for a measure to give the local bodies the necessary relief, by enabling them to convert their loans which had been raised at a high rate of interest. There was a point in connection with what had taken place in Dunedin, and which had been mentioned by the honourable member for Dunedin City (Mr. W. Hutchison), that he would like to touch upon. He had known Mr. Larking personally for the last eighteen years, and he was rather amused by the remarks which fell from the honourable member for Masterton, who seemed to think that Mr. Larking could not claim to be a poor man. He was a poor man in every sense of the word. He was a struggling storekeeper, who had been struggling for many years, and had been simply eking out a bare existence. His shop was situated in a locality where there was not much trade done, and any honourable gentleman who had had any experience in these matters knew that a storekeeper in the hands of the wholesale merchants was not in a very happy position.

He did not wish to support Mr. Larking with regard to his action in this matter altogether, because he thought he had acted somewhat indiscreetly; nor was he going to lay any blame on the Magistrate, or on the Justices of the Peace. All they had to do was to enforce the Act. But what he wished to draw attention to was that this particular storekeeper bought goods which were guaranteed to him to be unadulterated food through the ordinary channels of trade, and he bought them at the market price. As he had supplied people with the adulterated article, he was punished, and the traveller for the wholesale firm, which in this case was Mortin and Sons, London, got off scot-free. The traveller admitted to Mr. Fraser, the solicitor, that when he sold the goods he knew they were adulterated. Well, he (Mr. Morrison) thought that an Act which allowed such a thing as that to be done required to be amended at once. He thought the action taken by some of the Dunedin members in bringing the matter before the House was perfectly justifiable, and he thought it was the duty of the Government to amend the Act in such a direction as would make the wholesale traveller just as responsible as the retail grocer. If they could provide, in a Bill introduced, say, next session of Parliament, that grocers should be supplied with warrants by the wholesale travellers from whom they bought the goods, stating that they were unadulterated, and that the wholesale house guaranteed the goods, the wholesale man would then be made responsible. He hoped the discussion would not be entirely wasted, and that it would help to impress upon the Government the great necessity there was for taking some steps to amend the Adulteration Act in the direction he had suggested.

Mr. W. HUTCHISON, by way of personal explanation, would like to say that he did not intend, by implication or innuendo, to blame in any way the Resident Magistrate concerned. He had the most perfect confidence in that officer's administration of the law, and he believed he discharged his duty faithfully and well.

Sir R. STOUT was sorry the honourable gentleman, the Premier, and other honourable members seemed to have misapprehended the point which the honourable member for Chalmers wished to urge. He did not ask the Government to convert or guarantee the loans: he only asked that a machinery Bill should be introduced that would allow any local body to convert their loans, perhaps with the sanction of the Governor in Council. All that was wanted was a Bill with one or two clauses, on the lines of the Consolidated Loan Act of 1867, coupled with the conversion Act of 1884, which Act might be made applicable to local bodies. With regard to the Licensing Bill, he hoped the honourable gentleman would see his way to get a Bill passed through the House. He might point out that this was a most important policy Bill, although it could not be said to be a party measure, as there were members on both sides of the House who had dif-

Mr. Morrison

ferent views on the subject. He hoped an opportunity would be afforded of passing the Bill this session. There was one more matter he wished to touch on, and that was in reference to the question put by the honourable member for Christchurch City (Mr. Collins). He would like to emphasize the fact that it was absolutely necessary that there should be a proper building for the Supreme Court library in Christchurch. It would not cost much to put up a suitable building, and there would be no need for architectural display. He had formed one of a deputation two or three years ago from the Law Society. The Minister of Education was waited on by the deputation to endeavour to get a suitable Supreme Court library for Christchurch. He hoped the Government would provide sufficient funds out of the Public Works Fund for this purpose.

Mr. MCGUIRE said the question introduced by the honourable member for Chalmers was one of the most important he had seen on the Order Paper, and he was sorry to say the answer given to the question by the Premier was not at all satisfactory. He had thought the Government were prepared to work in the true interests of the local bodies, which were groaning under the load of taxation that they were compelled to bear, and that they were anxious to enable them to convert their loans, and do all they possibly could to reduce the rates of interest the people of the colony had to pay. They pretended that they were working in the interests of the struggling settlers of the colony. Well, here was an opportunity of showing their sincerity, by allowing the local bodies to convert their loans. The Premier had told them that the amount of the indebtedness of the local bodies was thirty millions. If that was so, the average interest the local bodies were now paying was 6 per cent., or £600,000 a year more than they should pay; but they all knew that the Premier was not particular when it suited his purposes to misstate facts. He believed that the indebtedness was only one-fifth of that amount. At any rate, it would be a great advantage to the local bodies to get their loans converted and their interest reduced. He did not think the Government ever had any objection to convert their own loans when they thought they could seize the sinking funds attached to them, and he believed in many cases that was the only reason which induced the present Government to convert their loans. If they had the interests of the struggling settlers at heart he certainly thought they should have no hesitation in bringing down a machinery Bill to allow the local bodies to reduce their rates of interest, for it was a duty the Government owed to the people to make their burdens as light as possible. He would like to see the Premier give an assurance that he would bring in such a measure at any rate next session, if not this. He had asked the Premier that afternoon without notice as to when a return of the business done at the Hawera, New Plymouth, and Stratford Courthouses, for which he had moved, would be laid on the table of the House. The

Premier said it would be laid on the table as soon as it was ready. He did not think that reply was satisfactory. The return ought to have been furnished long ago. He would, however, ask another question in reference to this matter. The Premier, in the most contemptible and mean way, unbecoming the position he should occupy in the House, was determined to punish a constituency for sending a representative to Parliament who was opposed to a Government the head of which was capable of the meanest action, and whose word no honourable member could rely on. In a few years' time it would be found that members of the Opposition were doing good work in the country; and he felt satisfied that the people of the country were beginning to realise that fact. It was a pity that more honourable members in the House were not taking an independent stand, as it would be a good thing even for the Government if they did so. He would advise the Government, for their own interest, to spend the ratepayers' money in an equitable and a just manner, not to deprive the people of their rights because they were represented by independent members. Honourable and independent members should be commended in place of being punished. He would take another opportunity

50. of showing the Government that they must have forgotten the promises they had made and the letters they had written. He would take the opportunity on another occasion of reading the Premier's letters, in order to show what the honourable gentleman had to say for himself. The Premier was the champion storyteller, and when found out he simply laughed as he was now laughing.

Mr. SEDDON begged the honourable gentleman's pardon. He was not laughing at the honourable gentleman. He had merely smiled at a remark made to him by a friend on his right.

Mr. McGUIRE said the honourable gentleman was smiling very loudly. However, he did not wish to take up the time of the House. He thought the Government had themselves to blame for the time which had been taken up that afternoon.

Mr. MILLAR did not intend to keep the House long in answering the remarks of honourable members, and he thought he could honestly say that he was not one of those who the Premier said wasted the time of the House, for since he had been in the House he had not been more than two hours altogether on his feet addressing the House during the whole time. But when it was a matter of justice that he had in hand, as in this case, he thought he was only doing right in ventilating it, whether or not he was accused of wasting the time of the House and the time of the country. The difference between the Premier and himself on this question was that the Premier imagined he was asking for a consolidating measure, while he was doing nothing of the sort. There was a vast difference between a consolidating Act and conversion. He had asked the Premier, "Whether he will, this session, intro-

duce legislation to confer the necessary powers upon local bodies to convert their loans without compelling each body to go to the expense and trouble of introducing separate Bills into this House?" He did not ask the Government to convert the loans. He was not contemplating a question of such magnitude as a general conversion scheme whereby the Government would have to guarantee any loan. He did not ask the Government to guarantee the loans that might be converted. He was asking merely whether a general machinery Act might not be passed, so that the local bodies might approach their debenture-holders, and deal with them, under the proper provision that any action which they might take should be referred to the Government. As he had said before, the Colonial Treasurer was going to bring down a measure under which authority would be asked to procure cheap money to give to the farmers. The honourable gentleman said that was necessary in the interests of the country. Now, he (Mr. Millar) had asked if the question of a reduction of local rates was not of much wider application, and he had been told there was not time this session to do anything in this direction. He asked if this was not evading the question. He would like to see a Bill of this sort placed on the Order Paper, and he thought the Government could, if they liked, bring a Bill like this forward. He maintained that if the necessary powers had been placed in the hands of the local bodies the City of Dunedin would not have required to come to the House for permission to convert their loans. All he asked was that the City of Dunedin Loans Conversion Bill should be taken as the basis, and that the powers therein contained should be applied to all other local bodies. If the Government held any of these debentures they would have to give consent before these debentures were converted. He asked that the machinery should be laid down, so as to enable the local bodies to do what he suggested. The two Chambers could pass the measure inside of a week, if the Government desired it. It would afford immediate relief to thousands of ratepayers throughout the country, and they had as much right to give Government assistance to these ratepayers as to give the farmers in the country cheap money. In the interests of the whole of the local bodies, he asked that this measure should be brought forward. If the Premier only thought it out he would see that there was a vast difference between what he (Mr. Miller) asked the Government to do and the introduction of a consolidation measure. They would not impose any liability on the State at all. He would content himself with these remarks, merely saying that he intended to take a further opportunity of bringing the matter forward. If the Government did not do this now, pressure would be brought to bear upon them next session, and the Government would be forced to do it. Through the want of this conversion some of the local bodies were losing £600 or £700 per annum. They had the opportunity of converting the debentures now, and if they did not take advantage of it the

money that was available would be invested in some other direction, so that at any future time they would have to pay a higher rate than would be charged them now. He therefore asked the Government to take the necessary steps to give this assistance to the local bodies.

Motion negatived.

DESTITUTE PERSONS BILL.

IN COMMITTEE.

Clause 3.—Act to apply to Natives.

Mr. HEKE moved, That the clause be amended so as to read as follows: "This Act shall come into operation in respect of persons of the aboriginal native race in such districts and at such times as the Governor shall from time to time appoint."

Motion agreed to, and clause, as amended, agreed to.

Bill reported, with amendment.

RATING ON UNIMPROVED VALUE BILL.

IN COMMITTEE.

Clause 2.—Interpretation.

Mr. WARD moved to strike out the word "rates" in the interpretation of "district," and to insert the words "a general rate."

Amendment agreed to, and words inserted.

The Committee divided on the question, "That the clause as amended be a clause of the Bill."

AYES, 43.

Buddo	Kelly, J. W.	Pirani
Buick	Lang	Reeves
Carncross	Larnach	Russell, G. W.
Carnell	Mackintosh	Saunders
Carroll	Maslin	Seddon
Collins	McGowan	Smith, G. J.
Duncan	McKenzie, J.	Stevens
Flatman	McKenzie, R.	Tanner
Graham	McLachlan	Ward
Hall	McNab	Willis
Hall-Jones	Meredith	Wilson.
Harris	Montgomery	
Hogg	Morrison	<i>Tellers.</i>
Houston	Parata	Mills
Joyce	Pinkerton	O'Regan.

NOES, 11.

Allen	Green	Stout.
Crowther	Heke	<i>Tellers.</i>
Earnshaw	Pere	Buchanan
Fraser	Russell, W. R.	Massey.

PAIRS.

For.	Against.
Cadman	Mitchelson
Lawry	Duthie
Newman	Mackenzie, T.
Steward.	Te Ao.

Majority for, 32.

Clause agreed to.

Clause 4.—Ratepayers may, by vote, adopt this Act.

Mr. Millar

Mr. MEREDITH moved, That the word "Twenty," in the words "Twenty per centum of the ratepayers," be struck out, with a view to inserting "Thirty."

The Committee divided.

AYES, 29.

Buick	Mackintosh	Pirani
Carnell	McKenzie, J.	Reeves
Collins	McKenzie, R.	Saunders
Flatman	McLachlan	Seddon
Graham	McNab	Stevens
Hall	Mills	Ward
Hall-Jones	Morrison	Willis.
Hogg	O'Regan	<i>Tellers.</i>
Kelly, J. W.	Parata	Russell, G. W.
Larnach	Pinkerton	Tanner.

NOES, 21.

Allen	Harris	Russell, W. R.
Buchanan	Heke	Smith, G. J.
Buddo	Houston	Stout
Carncross	Lang	Wilson.
Crowther	McGowan	<i>Tellers.</i>
Duncan	Montgomery	Massey
Earnshaw	Pere	Meredith.
Fraser		

Majority against, 8.

Word "twenty" retained.

Clause 5.—Vote not to be again submitted to ratepayers before three years.

Mr. SEDDON moved to insert a proviso: "Provided that on the expiration of such period the local authority of any aforesaid district may, under the conditions and in the manner prescribed, *mutatis mutandis*, by section four hereof, determine that the operation of this Act within the district under its jurisdiction shall cease, and thereupon, on and after the first of April next ensuing, 'The Rating Act, 1894,' shall, in its entirety, come into force therein; and such last-mentioned determination may again in like manner be reversed."

Proviso agreed to.

Clause 9.—All rates of other local bodies in same district to be levied in same manner.

The Committee divided on the question, "That the clause stand part of the Bill."

AYES, 36.

Bell	Houston	O'Regan
Buddo	Joyce	Parata
Buick	Kelly, J. W.	Pere
Carncross	Larnach	Pinkerton
Carnell	Lawry	Pirani
Carroll	McKenzie, J.	Seddon
Duncan	McKenzie, R.	Stevens
Earnshaw	McLachlan	Stout
Flatman	McNab	Ward.
Graham	Meredith	<i>Tellers.</i>
Hall	Montgomery	Collins
Harris	Morrison	Mills.
Hogg		

NOES, 11.

Crowther	Massey	Tanner.
Fraser	McGowan	<i>Tellers.</i>
Heke	Russell, G. W.	Allen
Hutchison, G.	Smith, G. J.	Buchanan.

PAIRS.

<i>For.</i>	<i>Against.</i>
Cadman	Mitchelson
Hall-Jones	Duthie
Mackintosh	Te Ao
Maslin	Green
Newman.	Mackenzie, T.

Majority for, 25.

Clause retained.

Clause 10. — Adjustment of rating - power under Acts 1876 and 1882 to this Act.

Sir R. STOUT moved the insertion of the following words before the proviso: "The limit of rating for general rates under this Act shall be the sum of twopence in the pound on the unimproved value of land for every three farthings in the pound on the gross value of land, and also for every shilling in the pound on the annual value of land authorised under any statute."

The Committee divided on the question, "That the words proposed to be inserted be so inserted."

AYES, 16.

Allen	Heke	Russell, W. R.
Bell	Hutchison, G.	Tanner.
Buick	Massey	
Carncross	McGowan	<i>Tellers.</i>
Collins	Parata	Earnshaw
Fraser	Pere	Stout.

NOES, 29.

Buddo	McKenzie, J.	Pirani
Carnell	McKenzie, R.	Russell, G. W.
Carroll	McLachlan	Seddon
Crowther	McNab	Smith, G. J.
Flatman	Meredith	Stevens
Graham	Mills	Ward
Hogg	Montgomery	Willis.
Kelly, J. W.	Morrison	<i>Tellers.</i>
Larnach	O'Regan	Hall
Lawry	Pinkerton	Harris.

PAIRS.

<i>For.</i>	<i>Against.</i>
Buchanan	Duncan
Duthie	Hall-Jones
Green	Maslin
Mackenzie, T.	Newman
Mitchelson	Cadman
Te Ao.	Mackintosh.

Majority against, 13.

Amendment negatived.

Mr. EARNSHAW moved the addition of the following words at the end of the clause: "Any city or borough that does not avail itself of the rating-powers contained in this Act may, in addition to the ordinary rates levied by such local body, impose a special rate on unimproved lands, to be called the 'unimproved land rate,' such rate not to exceed a halfpenny in the pound. Unimproved lands in this section to mean lands of less value than one-sixth the value of such land."

The Committee divided.

AYES, 11.

Bell	Heke	Smith, G. J.
Carncross	Parata	<i>Tellers.</i>
Collins	Pere	Earnshaw
Fraser	Russell, G. W.	Stout.

NOES, 31.

Buddo	Lawry	Pinkerton
Buick	McGowan	Pirani
Carnell	McKenzie, J.	Russell, W. R.
Carroll	McKenzie, R.	Seddon
Flatman	McLachlan	Stevens
Graham	McNab	Ward
Hall	Meredith	Willis.
Harris	Mills	
Hogg	Montgomery	<i>Tellers.</i>
Houston	Morrison	Kelly, J. W.
Larnach	O'Regan	Tanner.

PAIRS.

<i>For.</i>	<i>Against.</i>
Buchanan	Reeves
Duthie	Hall-Jones
Green	Maslin
Mackenzie, T.	Newman
Mitchelson	Cadman
Te Ao.	Mackintosh.

Majority against, 20.

Amendment negatived.

Clause 11. — "Every rate imposed on the gross value of any district shall be levied on the unimproved value thereof, as defined in section two of this Act, by a rate equivalent in its producing capacity to the rate imposed on the gross value of the said district; and such equivalent rate shall be ascertained in the manner provided by the next following section hereof: Provided that all water-rates or gas-rates fixed by Act or ordinance, and levied within the city, borough, county, or district, shall be levied on the gross value and not on the unimproved value."

Mr. FRASER moved, That after the word "ordinance," in the proviso, the words "or hospital and charitable-aid rates" be inserted.

The Committee divided.

AYES, 14.

Allen	Heke	Pinkerton
Bell	McGowan	Russell, W. R.
Earnshaw	McNab	<i>Tellers.</i>
Hall	Montgomery	Fraser
Harris	Parata	Stout.

NOES, 29.

Buddo	Larnach	Reeves
Carncross	Lawry	Russell, G. W.
Carnell	McKenzie, J.	Seddon
Carroll	McKenzie, R.	Stevens
Collins	McLachlan	Tanner
Flatman	Meredith	Ward
Graham	Mills	Willis.
Hogg	Morrison	<i>Tellers.</i>
Houston	O'Regan	Buick
Kelly, J. W.	Pirani	Smith, G. J.

PAIRS.

<i>For.</i>	<i>Against.</i>
Buchanan	Duncan
Duthie	Hall-Jones

Green	Maslin
Mackenzie, T.	Newman
Mitchelson	Cadman
Te Ao.	Mackintosh.

Majority against, 15.

Motion negatived.

Mr. PERE moved the following new clause:
 "This Act shall not apply to any land held by the aboriginal native owners, whether held by Native custom or otherwise."

The Committee divided on the question,
 "That the new clause be read a second time."

AYES, 12.

Allen	Heke	Stout.
Bell	McGowan	<i>Tellers.</i>
Buick	Pere	Buddo
Earnshaw	Russell, W. R.	Parata.
Fraser		

NOES, 33.

Carncross	Larnach	Pirani
Carnell	Lawry	Reeves
Carroll	Mackenzie, J.	Russell, G. W.
Collins	McKenzie, R.	Seddon
Flatman	McLachlan	Smith, G. J.
Graham	McNab	Tanner
Hall	Meredith	Ward
Harris	Mills	Willis.
Hogg	Montgomery	<i>Tellers.</i>
Houston	O'Regan	Morrison
Joyce	Pinkerton	Stevens.
Kelly, J. W.		

PAIRS.

<i>For.</i>	<i>Against.</i>
Buchanan	Duncan
Duthie	Hall-Jones
Green	Maslin
Mackenzie, T.	Newman
Mitchelson	Cadman
Te Ao.	Mackintosh.

Majority against, 21.

New clause negatived.

Bill reported, with amendments.

LAKE FORSYTH DRAINAGE BILL.

IN COMMITTEE.

Clause 1.—Short title.

Mr. BELL moved, That progress be reported.

The Committee divided.

AYES, 10.

Carncross	Russell, W. R.	<i>Tellers.</i>
Earnshaw	Smith, G. J.	Allen
Fraser	Stout	Bell.
Heke	Tanner.	

NOES, 32.

Buick	Lawry	Pinkerton
Carnell	McGowan	Pirani
Carroll	McKenzie, J.	Reeves
Collins	McKenzie, R.	Russell, G. W.
Flatman	McNab	Seddon
Graham	Meredith	Stevens
Hall	Mills	Ward
Harris	Montgomery	Willis.
Hogg	Morrison	<i>Tellers.</i>
Houston	O'Regan	Joyce
Larnach	Parata	McLachlan.

PAIRS.

<i>For.</i>	<i>Against.</i>
Buchanan	Duncan
Duthie	Hall-Jones
Green	Maslin
Mackenzie, T.	Newman
Mitchelson	Cadman
Te Ao.	Mackintosh.

Majority against, 22.

Motion negatived.

Clause 2.—Endowment for purposes of Act.

Mr. TANNER moved the insertion of the following words after the word "flood": "The income derived shall be appropriated to no other purpose than that mentioned in this Act."

The Committee divided.

AYES, 12.

Allen	Heke	Stout.
Bell	Hogg	<i>Tellers.</i>
Collins	Russell, W. R.	Russell, G. W.
Hall	Smith, G. J.	Tanner.
Harris		

NOES, 28.

Buddo	McGowan	Pinkerton
Buick	McKenzie, J.	Pirani
Carnell	McKenzie, R.	Reeves
Carroll	McLachlan	Seddon
Earnshaw	McNab	Ward
Flatman	Meredith	Willis.
Graham	Mills	
Houston	Morrison	<i>Tellers.</i>
Joyce	O'Regan	Montgomery
Larnach	Parata	Stevens.

PAIRS.

<i>For.</i>	<i>Against.</i>
Buchanan	Duncan
Duthie	Hall-Jones
Green	Maslin
Mackenzie, T.	Newman
Mitchelson	Cadman
Te Ao.	Mackintosh.

Majority against, 16.

Amendment negatived.

Bill reported, and read a third time.

ADJOURNMENT.

On the question, That the House do now adjourn,

Mr. COLLINS said he would like to utter one or two words of protest against sitting at that hour in the morning. He had sat in that House for some considerable time, and had refrained from adding to the multitude of words which had been spoken, because he did not wish to prolong the debate; but he thought now one or two words would not be out of place. In protesting against these long sittings, he might say he had paid a considerable amount of attention to the statements which had been made by those who he thought were chiefly answerable for the prolongation of the sitting. He had under his notice a remark made by the senior member for Wellington City.

Mr. SPEAKER said the honourable member could not refer to a previous debate of the present session.

Mr. COLLINS would not refer to a previous debate, but he thought it was quite time some protest was made against the continuous waste of time. They were sent there to do serious work; but afternoon after afternoon, and evening after evening, was wasted when the galleries were full, and the serious business of the House was done after the galleries were cleared—between eleven o'clock at night and one o'clock in the morning. Against this he wished to utter his most sincere and earnest protest. He was under the impression that the cause of the prolongation of the proceedings on this occasion had come from a strong desire to oppose the measures just now becoming law.

Mr. SPEAKER said that at that late hour of the morning he could not allow the previous debate to be referred to directly or indirectly, and the honourable member must confine himself to the question of adjournment.

Mr. COLLINS had no wish to unnecessarily prolong the debate, but it did appear to him that they had been kept there by the cause he had stated, and he begged to utter his very indignant protest against what had been going on. He felt sure that the waste of time that had taken place had been largely due to a desire to oppose the policy of those upon whom now devolved the administration of public affairs.

Mr. TANNER said that, as there seemed to be a disposition to put into *Hansard* certain statements at this stage, he would like to record his opinion of what had taken place that night, not with regard to any debate that had been completed, but with regard to the position of that House with the constituencies of the country. It had long been recognised by a very large number of people in this colony that the debates in that House had in previous years been prolonged to an hour which it was impossible for human endurance to sustain, and he said that during the sitting just terminated it had been impossible to transact business in a way befitting an Assembly of that kind. There had been a general expectation of a reform of this vicious custom, for many of the candidates were questioned at the last election on the subject, as to whether it was not possible to shorten the duration of the sittings, and whether, if there was any general wish on the part of members that were elected, they would not take steps to terminate the sittings at something like reasonable hours. He was sorry to say that many of the candidates who pledged themselves to the electors that they would do what lay in their power to carry on the debates in a reasonable way, and to terminate them at a reasonable hour, were now as members drifting into such a position that it was scarcely likely that the electors would recognise the pledges made to them on the hustings by a number of gentlemen in that House. There were those at the present time who were busily engaged throughout the coun-

try, both as hired mercenaries in the public Press and on the public platform, in belittling that House—in slandering, in many cases, its members, in holding the proceedings of that Chamber up to ridicule, and in pursuing a course of conduct which aimed at lowering the House in the estimation of the electors. He was sorry to say that, in his opinion, the conduct of certain honourable gentlemen present—he was speaking generally, with reference to no one single individual in the House, but to both sides, had been such during the last few days as to play openly into the hands of such detractors, and in that way the respect which that Assembly ought deservedly to be held in might be sensibly weakened. They could well afford to ignore some of the statements and jeering references made to the members of that House in the public Press and on the public platform, but “continual dropping wore away stone,” and there was no doubt in his mind that a number of honourable gentlemen sitting there, when they met their constituents, would be reproached, and, he believed, justly reproached. When the House had first met it spent weeks in revising its Standing Orders, and when the Standing Orders were revised the conduct of business had been such as to trench seriously on those Standing Orders, if not to violate them, and they would be reproached with being active participants in this practice. Work should be done whilst men's perceptions were clear, and not when they were jaded into physical exhaustion; and he wished to record his protest openly and publicly against the number of hours which the House had been compelled to sit. With regard to the sitting just terminated, the petty and insignificant amount of business transacted might with advantage have stood over, and the painful all-night sitting have been avoided by the exercise of a little tact.

Mr. BELL wished to state that it was not correct, as stated, that the late sitting had been caused by any desire to obstruct the present Administration. The late sitting had been caused by a disorganized opposition, consisting of members of both sides of the House, against the programme compelling the commencement of new business at such an hour as three o'clock in the morning.

Mr. WILLIS had been one of those who had sat out the whole of the proceedings without uttering a single word. But he thought it was about time, if they were beginning over again, to also take a hand. He would be quite satisfied, if this sort of thing was going to continue, to put in a good many more hours. He considered the Government were perfectly right in their action, seeing that they had been obstructed night after night, and it was therefore their duty to see that important measures which had been brought down were carried through. If, however, they were to go on day after day as they had been going on it was a bad look-out for the future. He had listened with some astonishment to the lecture delivered by the honourable member for Avon, who had informed the House of the serious

consequences that would occur to certain honourable members when they faced their constituents. He might say, however, that he considered that he was doing right in stopping there to assist the Government to carry their measures, and he thought he should be neglecting his duty if he did not do so.

Mr. G. J. SMITH also desired to enter his protest against the late sitting. The previous speaker had talked about members staying there and assisting the Government to pass their measures. Members had stayed there to assist in passing a particular Government measure—namely, the Rating on Unimproved Value Bill.

Mr. SPEAKER said the honourable gentleman must not refer to a past debate of the present session.

Mr. G. J. SMITH said honourable members had stayed to assist the Government in passing that measure; and at three o'clock they desired to go home, as they felt mentally and physically unable to continue working after such a long sitting as fifteen hours. After such a sitting, members of the House were not mentally capable of discussing even the Lake Forsyth Bill. He had entered his protest against these late sittings, and would continue to do so as long as he sat in the House. He thought that at two o'clock in the morning it was only reasonable to expect that members would wish to go home, and he desired to emphasize what the honourable member for Avon had said. Of course a certain amount of business had to be got through in the session, and if there were any necessity for putting through a policy Bill, or a measure of great importance, he would not object to sit still later. He could understand pushing on measures of that kind; but he thought that whoever was in charge of the Order Paper ought to leave honourable members fit to do their work on the following day. They were told that Committees had to be attended at half-past ten, but that was quite impossible. The Committees would not be more than half attended, and the work could not be properly done.

Mr. G. W. RUSSELL wished to repeat that what had occurred during the last three hours had no connection whatever with any question between the Government party and the Opposition; it was a matter between the Premier and a section of his own party. The Premier had declared his intention to break down the opposition of a section of his own party who were opposed to late hours, and they had had a straight-out lesson of what the "hob-nailed boots" could be made to do. What had been done had been due to an endeavour on the part of the Premier to beat down those members of his own party who were in favour of shorter hours. There was no possibility of members being able to meet at ten o'clock and do their Committee work, for there was no member of the House who could, consistently with a due regard to his health, start at that hour to do the business of the country in the way it ought to be done. He objected to their being driven at this pace, for it meant that in

a short time members would be physically unfit to attend to the work of the country; and towards the close of the session, instead of the large policy measures, which ought to have been brought down before, being discussed fully on their merits, it would be a case of all-night sittings, and the business of the country would be anything but properly done. He was quite prepared to sit for another two months if needful, but he did object to being asked to sit for eighteen hours a day. He had started at eleven o'clock that morning, and they were now here at six. The bulk of the delay had not been on the part of the Opposition, or on the part of what was known as "the left wing," but had been brought about by the determination of the Premier to force through a little tin-pot Bill that might have been passed through in five minutes if left over to the following day. The fact was, the Premier had simply determined to show the members of the Liberal party that he ruled them, and that he would have his way in connection with these matters. If, however, there were members who were prepared to accept that servile position in the House, it would be for them, when they faced their constituents, to explain their conduct. As to what the honourable member for Christchurch City (Mr. Collins) had said, he might say he had listened to him very carefully, but for his life he could not tell against whom that honourable gentleman had been protesting, and he should read his speech in *Hansard* very carefully to endeavour to find out what it all meant. So far as he was concerned, he must protest against these long hours, whether he gave pleasure or not. While he was in the House he should say what he thought, and what he thought was that up to the present time they were being driven along in a way that was entirely inconsistent with the Eight Hours Bill, the Shop-assistants Bill, the Factories Bill, and with everything the Government had brought down to lighten the hours of labour.

6.0. Mr. McGOWAN would like, if possible, to hear a little less about pledges, parties, and constituencies. If those honourable gentlemen who declaimed so much about these pledges, parties, and constituencies came to the House honestly intending to do the business of the country, it was their duty to do it in the best way with the means at their disposal. The fact was, there were a number of honourable gentlemen who considered that they were qualified to lead a particular party in the House, but he hoped there were a large majority there who looked upon the Liberal measures as of more importance than the occupying of a little time in the passing of those measures. What was the real cause of these measures being obstructed? It was that certain honourable gentlemen moved amendments, and if those amendments were not carried they were up in arms, and speech after speech was made, until the House was so tired that many had to go out of the House to get rid of the speeches.

Mr. FRASER thought that anybody who

Mr. Willis

had seen the Premier walking about the floor of the House in a disconsolate manner that evening, while his own followers were talking, must have seen how and by whom the time was spent: it was not by the Opposition, but by the other side of the House. The Premier himself had admitted as much. With regard to the observation of the last speaker in reference to honourable members moving amendments, all he had to say was that he had moved two amendments, and he was not ashamed of having done so; he had done his duty, and one of his amendments had been accepted by the Minister in charge. It would have been better for the Bill had the other also been accepted. So far as he was concerned, he knew of no organized opposition to the Bill on his side of the House, or of anything but an earnest desire to improve it.

Mr. PIRANI said the proceedings of the night, in keeping the House to that hour, were quite justified, in view of the determined opposition offered to the passage of the measure—opposition which was shown by the fact that one member of the Opposition spoke sixteen times on one clause. And the members of the Government party were determined to stick to the Government and see these measures through, not with the idea of breaking down opposition from members of the Government party who were disaffected, but to show the members of the Opposition that fourteen members of that House were not to be allowed night after night to keep sixty other members of the House waiting there patiently until they had finished pretending to discuss a measure before the House. He thought the Government were fully justified in continuing the sitting, even if only to teach a lesson to the Opposition, though it was not intended to teach any lesson to that section of the House which the honourable member for Riccarton fancied he led.

Mr. EARNSHAW noticed that three members of the Government party had spoken for each one of the Opposition, and he believed they would not have spoken if the Premier had waived his right of reply. A great deal had been said, by the honourable member for Palmerston especially, about the time which had been taken up; but he (Mr. Earnshaw) thought at the same time that the importance of the measures before them should be taken into consideration, when it would be found that there was not an undue length of time taken up over any of the measures. If the Government had agreed to adjourn at three, it might have shortened the debate; but, if they took into consideration the important bearing the measure would have on the country, not a moment had been wasted. He was quite sure, if *Hansard* came to be measured out, it would be found that the members of the Liberal party had occupied far more space than the Opposition. That was, of course, natural, owing to the much larger number on that side of the House. As to the term "organized opposition," in his opinion there never was a time when there was so little organized opposition as there was in this Parliament. He added

his protest to that of the honourable member for Riccarton with regard to the measures brought down that night, and the lateness of the sitting. If the Government were wise they would surely take warning, and, by shortening the hours of sitting, greatly facilitate the business. He did object to the remarks of the honourable member for Christchurch City (Mr. Collins), who had taken no part at all in the measures before them, although they bore largely on his own electorate. That honourable gentleman took no part until the House came out of Committee, and *Hansard* was opened to him. He thought it would be more in consonance with the position of the honourable member if he occupied a little time in taking some intelligent part in matters, at any rate, affecting his own electorate.

Captain RUSSELL rose neither to lecture anybody, nor to exhort anybody, nor to enter a protest.

Mr. REEVES.—To offer penitence, then?

Captain RUSSELL said he very seldom committed a crime, but when he did so he was penitent. It had been said that there had been organized opposition and prolonged discussion. Dealing first of all with the question of what was obstruction, he wished to assure the House that there had been no such thing. There had been no desire, either direct or indirect, to unduly prolong the debate that night. There had not been a single honourable gentleman with whom he had worked who had not acted solely from what he believed to be a proper sense of his duty. And, speaking from an abstract point of view, the debate was a very important one, seeing that the subject at issue was a change in the whole system of local taxation.

Mr. SPEAKER could not allow the honourable gentleman to proceed in that direction with his speech.

Captain RUSSELL would, then, not refer to that phase of the matter. All he would say was that any question which involved a great money expenditure had a claim to be discussed at very great length. One knew that during the debate in the English House of Commons on the Home Rule Bill they were for days and days, and he believed he was correct in saying weeks, on one clause; and, even supposing there had been obstruction, which he denied entirely, it had been justified by the fact that the Imperial Government had not thought fit since that time to bring down again the same Bill. Therefore, if there had been obstruction in that case, it was justified by the results. But honourable members must not imagine that because one clause or a series of clauses were debated at some length in the House there was therefore obstruction. There had been no endeavour whatsoever to obstruct.

An Hon. MEMBER said this Bill had been a few days in Committee.

Captain RUSSELL said it had not been a few days in Committee, but, even supposing it had been, it was perfectly legitimate that the subject should be debated for several days. Their business in coming to Parliament was to ventilate

any abuse they might be aware of, and, so long as a man was not unduly prolix, and spoke to the subject before him, it could not be said there was any obstruction whatever. But they had been told just now that the Opposition had learned a lesson that night. He was happy to say if they had learned any lesson they had learned this lesson: that if ever they were pressed hardly upon in being compelled to sit until advanced hours of the night when there was no reason to do so they would be able to enforce reasonable hours on the House, although, as an Opposition, they were only a small number. It would be found that more and more the Opposition would insist, so far as it lay in their power, upon the business of the House being conducted during reasonable hours, and so long as the conduct of the Opposition in protesting against these unreasonable hours was carried on in a proper and reputable manner they would get support from many honourable members who did not sympathize with them at all in politics. It was absurd that members should be kept sitting in the House hour after hour when they were physically incapable of doing the work they were sent there for. It was through no desire to obstruct that the Opposition would resist these long hours of sitting, but simply through an honest desire to serve the interests of the country. While the Government endeavoured to force late sittings on the House, he would join with other honourable members in resisting any further business being brought before the House at any late hour of the night.

Mr. HOGG thought the honourable member was justified in repudiating anything in the shape of organized opposition, because he was satisfied that during the present session the Opposition had been thoroughly disorganized; but he could not sit down without entering his protest against the undue hours that had been observed in connection with this discussion. He had nothing whatever to say with regard to members of the Opposition. He had nothing whatever to say against their conduct in freely criticizing such a very important measure as the Rating on Unimproved Value Bill.

Mr. SPEAKER said the honourable gentleman could not refer to a past debate.

Mr. HOGG admitted that the time taken up in that debate was reasonable; but he regretted very much that, after the debate had been concluded at that early hour of the morning, further business was taken. He regretted there was nothing in the Standing Orders which would prevent Bills being carried through at such a time as three o'clock in the morning. He did not think it was fair to honourable members. He hoped, after the experience of last night and that morning, such proceedings would not be repeated very frequently during the remainder of the session.

Mr. FLATMAN would not have risen at that hour of the morning if he did not consider that unjust reflections had been cast upon those who had been following the Government party that night. He protested against the words which

had been used as to their being "dumb, driven." Honourable members went into the lobby with the Government quite of their own free will. No arrangement had been made with him, and he did not believe any arrangement had been made with any other member. He considered he was doing his duty, and doing what was best for the country, in staying there till that hour to back up the Government in carrying these measures, and he would always do so under similar circumstances. He did not wish to prolong the hours of sitting, nor did he think other honourable members wished to do so; but he did not see why they should be taunted as they had been when they had only been doing what they considered their duty.

Mr. ALLEN said what had been going on really was a process of intimidation. The Government were trying to intimidate those who chose to express any opposition whatever to anything the Government might bring down. That was not fair to the House or the country. It was quite true the Opposition were very few in number, but though few in number they would not submit to intimidation. They would not be doing their duty to the country if they permitted measures which ought to be debated to go through the House without any debate at all. There was reasonable debate; and he knew, and the Premier knew perfectly well, there was such a thing as unreasonable debate. It had not been shown, and it could not be shown, so far as the opposition on that side of the House was concerned, that there had been any unreasonable delay, either that night or the night before; but, if, by the process of intimidation, the Government thought they were going to close their mouths, they would find that could not be done. Honourable members on the Opposition side were entitled to express their opinions, and he hoped they would always do so. The "big boots" could be applied. They knew what that was, and they knew that sometimes they were put on; but if members were to close their mouths, and not discuss measures that ought to be discussed, they would not be doing their duty. They were asked to consider, during the course of the evening, certain Bills: one of these was, at any rate, a measure that could be called a policy measure, but neither of the others was, and if they passed a policy measure at three o'clock in the morning it was not fair to ask the House at such time to commence more or less unimportant measures which could not be considered Government measures at all, but one of which had been taken up by the Government for a private individual. He thought that position ought to be fairly placed before the country. Members on the Opposition side of the House were quite prepared to stay there and do the work fairly and reasonably. When anything unreasonable was asked of them he thought it was right they should raise their protests. He, for one, made a protest that night. He said that the Government had no right to call upon the House to enter into the consideration of measures at three o'clock that were, comparatively speaking, of very little importance and not Govern-

Captain Russell

ment measures, and with regard to which they could not say there was any question of Government policy concerned. It was not right, at three o'clock in the morning, to ask the House to consider these measures. If this was a process of intimidation, let them know it was so. They were not to be driven by any such process into closing their mouths, and he contended it was not right for any strong or powerful party in the House to attempt anything of the kind.

Mr. SEDDON had thought, when he simply moved the adjournment of the House at six o'clock, that the House would adjourn, and that they would have been by that time in bed. But it appeared some honourable members of the Government party had taken exception to what had been done that evening. It was not the first time they had done so. He referred to the honourable member for Riccarton; and he meant to tell the honourable gentleman this, and the honourable gentleman would understand him better a little later on: that so long as he was leader, and so long as his colleagues were with him, it would not be a case of the tail wagging the dog. The honourable member for Riccarton had on a former occasion made a violent attack on the Minister of Education, and had on more than one occasion endeavoured to harass the Government. If that course of conduct came from one of those who were not supporting the Government he could understand it, but coming from a Government supporter one would have thought the honourable gentleman would have shown some consideration for those who were endeavouring to do the best they could in the interests of the Liberal party and of the people of the country. Probably it might not be that he would require to speak so plainly again to the honourable member, for it pained him to have even said so much, knowing as he did that the honourable gentleman meant well. There was nothing like speaking plainly, as the honourable member himself had taken the opportunity of speaking rather plainly, and throwing the blame upon the Premier. In his opinion, the member for Pareora had put the matter very plainly when he said that a majority of the Government supporters had seen that an attempt was being made to prevent the business being done, and, that being the case, they loyally supported the Government in seeing the business through. Another protest had come from the member for Christchurch City (Mr. G. J. Smith); but he would not say much to him, because he had not from the first looked upon the honourable gentleman as a Government supporter, and consequently he did not consider the remarks he had made worth noticing. The honourable gentleman had repeatedly, just as the Government were about to put business through, used his influence and voice in assisting to get the House adjourned, and thus prevent business from being done.

Mr. J. G. SMITH.—At two or three o'clock in the morning.

Mr. SEDDON thought those honourable

members who had been returned to support the present party ought to take these things into consideration, and, if there was a time when they ought to consider that, it was that night.

Mr. G. W. RUSSELL asked if the honourable gentleman referred to the Lake Forsyth Bill.

Mr. SEDDON.—It was not a question of any Bill at all. It had been understood that certain business had been arranged, and under the circumstances the Government were bound to pass these Bills, and the honourable member for Riccarton knew that just as well as he (Mr. Seddon) did. What could have placed the matter more fairly before the House than the words of the leader of the Opposition, who had stated that they were able to enforce their will upon the House? And that, he presumed, was why they had kept the House there until half-past six in the morning—to enforce the will of the minority upon a large majority, who were determined to do the business of the country. Those words of the honourable member for Hawke's Bay ought to be sufficient warning in the future to those who had that night taken upon themselves to lecture the Government on account of not going on with the business of the country. The honourable member for Hawke's Bay had also said that there was not an organized Opposition; and, that being so, he must admit that it was very difficult for the Government to do business with a disorganized Opposition. They had no leader on that side with whom the Government could make arrangements. The only member he thought they could make arrangements with seemed to be the senior member for Wellington City. It used to be the case when an arrangement was made that it was observed and business was proceeded with, and he would be glad if honourable members on that side of the House would select some leader, with whom the Government could arrange matters and the course of business.

Captain RUSSELL said he had stated that there was no organized opposition to the Bill. He had not been speaking of party at all; and the honourable member was misquoting him.

Mr. SEDDON thought the honourable gentleman's remarks might apply to the Bill, and the honourable gentleman himself admitted that there was a disorganized Opposition. That being the case, it was very difficult for the Government to arrange the business of the House, and those gentlemen who earnestly desired to help the Government would, he hoped, take

6.30. warning. He said at once that, so far as the Government were concerned, the assertion made that this was an attempt to beat down a section of their own party was inaccurate. There were some members present—the honourable member for Pareora, the honourable member for Ashley, the honourable member for Mataura, and the honourable member for Wanganui; and he could name dozens of members—all of whom believed in going home early, but who on this occasion, in consequence of their repugnance to what had gone

on, were determined to see that the business should not be blocked by less than half a dozen members. He thanked them for their discretion, discernment, and loyalty. It was not in the interests of public business that they should continue sitting until all hours in the morning. There were very few who held the views of the honourable member for Riccarton and the honourable member for Christchurch City (Mr. G. J. Smith) upon this question. The speech of the honourable member for Avon was a reasonable one, to which he did not object, compared with that of the honourable member for Riccarton. He desired to say that for the future he would be no party to making any arrangement with the Opposition. It had been his pleasure to meet gentlemen of the other side who had come to ask what business was coming on, and to have arrangements made as to what should be proceeded with; but what had occurred showed that there was no advantage in making any arrangement with them. The Government would place the Bills upon the Order Paper, and, with the help of those who were loyal to the Government, would pass them. The arrangements that had been made had led to complications, and had put the Government in a false position; and this had led the Government's own supporters to find fault with the Government; so that, with regard to any arrangement in the future, he would simply consider what would suit honourable members and what would be in the interests of the country. It was no small matter to himself and his colleagues to remain here for another two months in session. They had more work to get through in a day than honourable members. They had to be down at half-past nine in the morning to attend to departmental work, and then they had to prepare for Committees, to attend on Committees, and they had to attend to Cabinet work, and to be in attendance all the time looking after the business in the House. So that, so far as Ministers were concerned, the staying-up to late hours was a greater hardship to them than to other honourable members. As he had said, so far as the wishes of the Government were concerned, they might conclude the business by the first week in October with only reasonable criticism and debate of measures. He must say he had never known so much debate on measures in Committee as there had been in the present House. The Government had no wish to drive the House or to have measures passed hastily or ill-considered. But, standing there as the leader of the House, he might tell honourable members that he had never known a session where there had not occasionally been a late sitting—difficulties had arisen which had resulted in an all-night sitting. But the atmosphere was generally cleared thereby, and the work went on more smoothly for it, and he thought this would be the case on the present occasion. He hoped this would not occur again, but if it did, and the Government knew that everything was going to happen as it had happened in this instance, he would ask honourable members to

support him, and he felt sure that they would, in taking a similar course again.

The House divided on the question, "That the House do now adjourn."

AYES, 27.

Buddo	McKenzie, J.	Smith, G. J.
Carroll	Meredith	Stevens
Collins	Mills	Stout
Earnshaw	Parata	Tanner
Flatman	Pinkerton	Ward
Graham	Pirani	Willis.
Hall	Reeves	<i>Tellers.</i>
Houston	Russell, G. W.	Harris
Larnach	Seddon	Montgomery.
McGowan		

NOES, 12.

Allen	McKenzie, R.	Russell, W. R.
Carnell	McNab	<i>Tellers.</i>
Guinness	Morrison	Buick
Hogg	O'Regan	Joyce.
Lawry		

PAIRS.

<i>For.</i>	<i>Against.</i>
Cadman	Mitchelson
Duncan	Buchanan
Hall-Jones	Duthie
Mackintosh	Te Ao
Maslin	Green
Newman.	Mackenzie, T.

Majority for, 15.

Motion agreed to, and the House adjourned at a quarter to seven o'clock a.m.

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

Friday, 7th September, 1894.

Borough of Oamaru Leasing Bill—Gaming and Lotteries Bill—Hamilton Domains Empowering Bill.

The Hon. the SPEAKER took the chair at half-past two o'clock.

PRAYERS.

BOROUGH OF OAMARU LEASING BILL.

The Hon. Mr. MACGREGOR, in moving, *That this Bill be now read the third time*, said it was his duty to explain, in reference to the question raised by the Hon. Mr. Stevens, that it had been considered that the section referred to in "The Municipal Corporations Act, 1886," section 224, did not provide for the granting of leases containing covenants for more than one renewal, and the Bill proposed to give the Corporation power to give renewals and covenants providing for renewals from time to time—not merely one renewal only under the section now referred to. The valuation, when fixed by the valuers, had to be paid not by the outgoing tenant, but by the Corporation, and it was deemed quite unsuitable that that should apply to leases of this sort in the case of a Corporation in the position that the Corporation of Oamaru was known to be in. The Bill had been introduced after full consideration of the provisions of the 224th section of the Municipal

Mr. Seddon

Corporations Act, and advice had been taken as to the power of the Corporation under that Act. That advice was to the effect that such a lease as proposed by the Bill could not be granted under the 224th section.

The Hon. Mr. STEVENS said that his honourable friend in his explanation had not committed himself personally to the opinion that the Bill was necessary. He had simply given the opinion of somebody else. He (Mr. Stevens) thought that the Bill was not required, and he did not consider that it was at all necessary. If they referred to section 224 of "The Municipal Corporations Act, 1886," they would see that there was power to lease for sixty-six years, at the discretion of the Municipal Council, and also power to grant a renewal for thirty-one years. The power under this provision was confined to the valuation of buildings and improvements, but there was nothing that prevented the Corporation from so arranging that the valuation for improvements should be paid by the outgoing tenant, or from making any other arrangement they thought fit. The importance of the question was not in regard to this particular Bill, but with regard to the attitude of Councils generally in reference to measures of this kind. It seemed to him that the practice was growing up, particularly this session, for a local body which chose to employ a lawyer, who told them that legislation was necessary, to come to the House with a special Bill. It was a very undesirable practice, and one which would necessarily develop, if permitted to continue, and he trusted the Council would limit it in regard to Bills of this description. He had thought it his duty to call attention to this practice, as he was perfectly convinced that the present Bill was absolutely unnecessary from that point of view.

The Hon. Mr. SHRIMSKI desired to say he so far had taken no part in the passing of the Bill. As a ratepayer in the Town of Oamaru, he thought the Bill was not required, and he agreed with the remarks of the Hon. Mr. Stevens. There ought to be some definite term for which leases were to be extended, and they ought to be extended, as at present, from time to time. With regard to the question of valuation, the system was that the valuation was always paid by the incoming tenant, and the Corporation were not responsible for it, excepting under certain circumstances, when they had to give notice in due time that the leases would expire. He certainly thought the Bill was unnecessary, and he threw the responsibility of it upon the Mayor and Corporation of Oamaru for the time being, and upon the Corporation's solicitor.

The Hon. W. DOWNIE STEWART considered the Bill was quite unnecessary. The clause in the Municipal Corporations Act referred to by the Hon. Mr. MacGregor did not confine the renewal to one term only, as it provided that power should be granted to the Corporation to grant renewals from time to time. That clause, he considered, was really a better one in some respects than the provisions of the present Bill, as it left the Corporation

to make such provision as they thought desirable to get the valuation out of the incoming tenant, unless under exceptional circumstances the Corporation thought it desirable to pay the outgoing tenant necessary compensation. Under the Bill before the Council a certain clause would have to be inserted in the lease, leaving it to the outgoing tenant to make the valuation. He quite agreed with the Hon. Mr. Stevens that this patched system of legislation was encumbering the statute-book to a very great extent, and, although some of these might not contain objectionable provisions, if any amendment were necessary it seemed to him it ought to be introduced in the Municipal Corporations Act. He confessed he thought the Bill was absolutely unnecessary, and the honourable gentleman in charge of it had not shown in his remarks that it was necessary.

The Hon. Mr. McLEAN did not agree with the remarks of the Hon. Mr. Stevens and the Hon. Mr. Stewart as to the Bill being unnecessary. It proposed to put the leaseholders of the Town of Oamaru in the same position as those in Dunedin. It simply proposed that the incoming tenant should pay the valuation, the ground-rent being valued.

The Hon. W. DOWNIE STEWART said that was all provided for.

The Hon. Mr. McLEAN thought it was not provided for; otherwise the Corporation would not have asked for the Bill. They simply wanted the same power as was given to other towns. It did not commit the Corporation to pay the valuation, but simply required that the lease should be put up to auction with an upset ground-rent. He considered the Bill was a very fair one, and he might say that it had been discussed in the Local Bills Committee; and, if the Municipal Corporations Act did make the necessary provision, why did they get a similar Bill for the Harbour Board of Dunedin?

The Hon. W. DOWNIE STEWART said that Board came under the Public Bodies' Powers Act, and the Harbour Board did not exist under the Municipal Corporations Act.

The Hon. Mr. MACGREGOR trusted the Council would not hastily come to any conclusion upon the matter, which really arose from a desire on the part of the Corporation to do some measure of justice to the tenants who held leases granted in the early days, and which were on the point of expiring. In those leases the covenants as to the valuation for improvements were found to be absolutely invalid, and the consequence was that the Corporation were in the position that, if these leases were allowed to expire, the tenants holding them would suffer a great injustice, inasmuch as they would lose all their improvements. The Corporation, in order to meet that difficulty, had asked Parliament to give them the same powers as were granted to the Corporation of Dunedin by an Act passed in 1886, which was in exactly the same terms as the present Bill. He was at a loss to understand the objection raised by the Hon. Mr. Shrimski to the Bill. He was one of those

always crying out about the heavy rates in Oamaru, and he could conceive that he would be willing to see these tenants losing the value of their improvements.

The Hon. Mr. SHRIMSKI.—No.

The Hon. Mr. MACGREGOR said the result would be, if this Bill were not passed, that the tenants would lose the value of their improvements. With regard to the question as to whether the Bill was necessary, he thought that the Hon. Mr. Stewart had not given sufficient consideration to the provisions of section 224 of the Municipal Corporations Act. Under that section two classes of leases could be granted—namely a lease for sixty-six years and a lease for twenty-one years, with a covenant for renewal; but it would be noticed that there was no provision for valuation under either of these leases. There was a provision for granting a lease for twenty-one years and for extending it for a term of twenty-one years. The Bill was to grant to the Corporation of Oamaru power to grant a lease with the right of renewal, and also to provide that the valuation was to be payable to the outgoing tenant.

The Hon. Mr. STEVENS said the Bill did not deal with any leases in existence, but only with those to be hereafter granted.

The Hon. Mr. MACGREGOR said the proposal was to grant new leases to those tenants with covenants such as were set out in the schedule. He hoped that these considerations, which were all very well in their place, but out of place in dealing with a Bill of this kind, would not prevent the Council from giving the Corporation power to do justice to those tenants concerned.

The Hon. Mr. SHRIMSKI wished to make an explanation, as he had been charged with selfish motives. The honourable gentleman who introduced the Bill had stated that he (Mr. Shrimski) was a freeholder, and that consequently he would not wish to grant those people compensation for improvements. He denied that *in toto*. The reason he objected to the Bill was that the Mayor and six members of the Corporation were tenants of the Corporation, and were therefore interested in the matter.

The Council divided on the question, "That the Bill be read the third time."

AYES, 22.

Acland	Holmes	McLean
Barnicoat	Jenkinson	Montgomery
Bolt	Jennings	Oliver
Bonar	Kelly	Pharazyn
Bowen	Kerr	Richardson
Buckley	MacGregor	Swanson
Dignan	McCullough	Whyte.
Feldwick		

NOES, 9.

Morris	Stevens	Walker, L.
Ormond	Stewart	Whitmore
Reynolds	Wahawaha	Williams.

Majority for, 13.

Bill read the third time.

Hon. Mr. MacGregor

GAMING AND LOTTERIES BILL.

The Hon. Mr. MACGREGOR brought up the report of the Managers on the amendments made by the Council in the Gaming Bill, and reported that it had been agreed by the Conference that it should be recommended to the Council and the House of Representatives—(1) That the new clause, being clause 7 of the Bill, be struck out; and (2) that in clause 6, eighth line, the words "Colonial Secretary" be struck out, and the words "Governor in Council" substituted for the same.

Motion agreed to.

HAMILTON DOMAINS EMPOWERING BILL.

The Hon. Mr. McCULLOUGH did not propose to trespass upon the time of the Council in moving the second reading of the Bill, as he had on a previous occasion explained fully its objects and intentions. The Bill proposed to allow the Domain Board of Hamilton to lease portions of the endowments, and to include in the lease a condition that compensation should be allowed the tenants at the end of the term. The Bill had been found necessary because the Board had granted a lease some years ago upon the conditions set forth in the Second Schedule, believing they had the power to grant it, and the Governor signed that lease as correct, but upon the Board granting other leases and sending them to Wellington for the signature of the Governor, the Law Officers of the Crown found that there was no authority, under the law as it stood at present, to grant such a lease. Therefore the Board had been driven to introduce this Bill for the purpose of validating the lease they had granted some years ago, and to enable them to grant leases of a similar kind. The area of the land surrounding Hamilton was very much larger than the Board could deal with, and, as the Board could not induce people to take up leases where no compensation was allowed, this was the only course open; otherwise the land would have to lie unproductive, covered with briar and gorse. The lease that had been granted—to a person named Horne—was for fourteen years, and it was proposed to give authority to grant a lease for a second term of fourteen years upon the conditions set forth in the Second Schedule of the Bill. He trusted the Council would read the Bill a second time, and any alterations that were necessary could be made in Committee. He was aware that there were some objections, but when the Bill got into Committee he would be prepared to give consideration to any suggested amendments. He moved, *That the Bill be now read the second time.*

The Hon. Mr. SHRIMSKI did not wish to oppose the Bill, but he thought the Council ought to be made aware what amount of compensation was to be given to Mr. Horne.

The Hon. Mr. McCULLOUGH said that no compensation was to be given to him now, but his lease was to be validated. At the end of the first term of fourteen years his improvements were to be valued by some person ap-

pointed by the Governor, and the land put up to public auction loaded with the compensation that he was entitled to. He would have as good a right as any other person to buy the lease, and, if he did not buy it, the amount of compensation allowed would be paid over to him.

The Hon. W. DOWNIE STEWART wished to refer to a point he had previously raised. He thought the Bill should be safeguarded in some way by providing that the consent of the Domain Board—that was, the Borough Council—should be necessary to all leases, so that it should not be deprived of land without its consent.

Bill read the second time.

The Council adjourned at ten minutes to four o'clock p.m.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.

Friday, 7th September, 1894.

First Readings—Exemption of Improvements from Taxation—Lunatic Asylum Attendants—Kawhia—Manure in Boroughs—Amalgamation of Colonial Bank and Bank of New Zealand—Chinese—Charges against the Police—Education Report—Old Soldiers' Claims—Horowhenua Post-office—Luggage Telephone—Featherston Courthouse—Stratford Courthouse—Telegraph Operators—Adjournment—Rating on Unimproved Value Bill—Gaming Bill—Government Railways Bill—Bank of New Zealand and Colonial Bank.

Mr. SPEAKER took the chair at half-past two o'clock.

PRAYERS.

FIRST READINGS.

Post Office Bill, Lunatics Bill (No. 2), Westland and Nelson Coalfields Administration Bill, Native Lands Claims and Boundaries Adjustment and Titles Empowering Bill, Bankruptcy Bill, Chattels Transfer Bill, Supreme Court Bill.

EXEMPTION OF IMPROVEMENTS FROM TAXATION.

Mr. GRAHAM asked the Government, Will they make any necessary alteration required to insure that the land-tax, with its exemption of all improvement, shall be so in reality as well as in name? He asked the question because, when the land-tax was first brought forward by the late Mr. Ballance, he expressed regret that he could not at once make it a land-tax pure and simple, though he hoped to be able to do so before long. The time was supposed to have arrived when provision was made in the Land and Income Assessment Act Amendment Act of last year under which all improvements were exempted from the payment of land-tax, and provision made that such tax should in future be levied only on the assessed value of land, after deducting the value of all improvements. But, in consequence of mortgages being still assessed, as though they were land, at their full face-value, a large amount was still raised

under the head of land-tax which was in reality a tax on improvements, because the full value of the land included in many mortgages represented only a portion of the face-value, while the balance, in some cases representing the major part of the security, consisted of improvements, which had to pay £4 8s. 4d. per £1,000, the same as if the improvements were really land, instead of £1 15s. per £1,000, as would be the case if mortgages were taxed upon the income derived from the difference between the actual land-value and the face-value of the mortgages. As the present position was anomalous, and inconsistent with the Amendment Act of 1893, and as the additional burden of necessity ultimately fell upon the mortgagor, he hoped the Minister would give his opinion as to the justice or otherwise of what existed, and state whether the anomaly was likely to be removed.

Mr. WARD said that provision was being made to reopen the whole question of assessments. It was shown that very often people in giving in their valuations entirely over-estimated the value of their improvements. That, of course, led to difficulties between them and the Department of Taxes, with the result that the department often had to reduce the valuation. These difficulties would naturally occur, as the returns could not always be relied upon. When this kind of thing occurred the owners were requested by the department to state their values fairly. The whole question, however, would be dealt with in an amending Bill, which, he hoped, would be brought down on Tuesday.

Mr. GRAHAM understood that the Colonial Treasurer acknowledged that *bond fide* improvements ought not to be taxed as land held on mortgage.

Mr. WARD hoped the honourable gentleman would wait until the Bill was circulated.

LUNATIC ASYLUM ATTENDANTS.

Mr. G. W. RUSSELL asked the Government, Will they agree to the setting-up of a tribunal for considering the cases in which lunatic-asylum attendants desire to appeal against summary dismissal or other alleged injustices?

Mr. REEVES, in reply, said, as regarded any charges or allegations of tyranny or oppression, he was quite willing that there should be an inquiry. He was always prepared to inquire into any *prima facie* case of tyranny or injustice, if the case appeared to be of so serious a character as would warrant the setting-up of a special tribunal. With regard to Sunnyside in particular, he had invited inquiry into the allegations of tyranny or oppression, and was quite willing the range should extend over the whole period during which he had been in charge of the Lunacy Department.

KAWHIA.

Mr. LANG asked the Minister of Lands, Whether he will endeavour to open up land near the Township of Kawhia for settlement as soon as possible (about two-thirds of the township was sold in 1884 at a very high price,

the purchasers believing that the land would be opened up in the surrounding district, and on account of this not having been done the purchasers are unable to make a living on their sections? He might say that Kawhia was the largest harbour on the West Coast south of Manukau, being six miles in length and four miles in breadth, and having a depth of 17ft. at low water in the channel. About ten years ago the Government offered a number of sections for sale in the township; about two-thirds of these sections were sold at high prices, one quarter-acre section realising as much as £400. The purchasers of the sections at that time understood that a large portion of the surrounding country was to be opened up by the Government; but nothing had been done up to the present time in that direction, and the purchasers were therefore unable to make a living on their sections; and, as he understood that the Natives were now willing to dispose of their land, he hoped the Minister would see his way to open up the country for settlement as early as possible.

Mr. J. McKENZIE, in reply, said the Township of Kawhia was sold in 1884, and at that time there were really no Crown lands near the township that could be disposed of. Since then land had been acquired by the Government close to the township, and they were negotiating for some more land in the same district, which, in a short time, they hoped to have acquired. Surveyors would be sent there for the purpose of getting the land ready to place in the market, and he hoped during next summer to have one of the blocks near the township placed in the market.

MANURE IN BOROUGHES.

Mr. LAWRY asked the Premier, If he will make provision in the Municipal Corporations Act Amendment Bill to enable corporate bodies preventing any person using offensive matter as manure within boundaries of any city or borough?

Mr. SEDDON said the present laws did not provide against cases of this kind, and in that respect the law required amending. He should have thought this would have been covered by existing legislation, as, no doubt, it was undesirable to have persons using offensive matter in manures in our towns. It had been done, he knew, and it was well that it should be brought within proper limits. The matter would be considered, and, if there was found to be a necessity to amend the law, an amendment could be proposed in the Municipal Corporations Act.

AMALGAMATION OF COLONIAL BANK AND BANK OF NEW ZEALAND.

Mr. PIRANI asked the Colonial Treasurer,—(1.) Will the Government give formal assurance to this House that they will not approve any agreement for the purchase by the Bank of New Zealand of the business of the Colonial Bank of New Zealand, or of any amalgamation of the business of these banks, unless such agreement shall distinctly and in terms set out, as the

Mr. Lang

price of the shares of either or both companies, the market price of the said shares as at the date of the passing by this House of the Bank of New Zealand Guarantee Act? (2.) Will the Government give formal assurance that no such agreement shall be ratified unless the concurrence of this House has first been formally obtained by resolution? (3.) If the directors of the Bank of New Zealand have power to make any such agreement without the concurrence of the Government, will they immediately legislate to make such consent a condition precedent to completion of such agreement? He had been led to put this matter on the Order Paper because certain statements had been circulated to the effect that a band of speculators had been formed in the colony to purchase the shares of the Colonial Bank in anticipation of a rise in price owing to the amalgamation of the business of that bank with that of the Bank of New Zealand. If that were the case, the additional money that would be paid for the bank's business would naturally come out of the pockets of the taxpayers of the colony, owing to the colony having guaranteed the business of the Bank of New Zealand.

Mr. WARD said the Government, in matters of this kind, were, of course, unable to take cognisance of outside reports. They must wait until they were communicated with, and they had no proposals before them in the direction indicated by the honourable gentleman. If the Government received any proposal from the Colonial Bank it would be the duty of the Government to submit it to the House; but, until they received such a proposal, they could, of course, take no action in the matter.

Captain RUSSELL asked if the Colonial Treasurer expected that any such proposals would be made at some time or another.

Mr. WARD said that entirely depended on the people concerned.

Captain RUSSELL asked if the Minister thought that application must be made to the Government before any such amalgamation could take place.

Mr. WARD would say that, if the Bank of New Zealand authorities attempted to do anything of the sort indicated without communicating with the Government, they would be doing something most extraordinary; and they would not do so, he ventured to say, without communicating with the Government.

CHINESE.

Mr. HOGG asked the Government, If they have considered the probable effect on the Australasian Colonies of the stoppage of Chinese emigration to the United States, and whether it is proposed to take effective steps for limiting the proportion of aliens, especially Chinese, to British-born subjects within the colony? He believed the matter was creating a good deal of attention. According to information they had received, a treaty had been entered into between China and the United States under which there was to be no Chinese immigration into the United States for the next ten years. Therefore the question was, where

the alien population was to find an outlet. It was rather a serious matter for the colony, because, situated as this colony was so near to China, and having a considerable amount of trade with that country at the present time, there was a danger, if steps of an effective nature were not taken, notwithstanding the poll-tax in New Zealand, that the colony might suffer seriously from a sudden influx of a class which was considered by competent authorities to be undesirable. If the Government could give a satisfactory reply to the question it would probably save a great deal of agitation.

Mr. SEDDON said there was already a Bill on the Order Paper which would deal with this question. He hoped to have that Bill in the hands of members at an early date. He quite agreed that the matter required early attention, and the Parliament must not dissolve without dealing with it. It was a growing evil in the City of Wellington. One need only look around to see the necessity there was for some steps being taken. It was the intention of the Government to ascertain the number of Chinese in Wellington, the various occupations they followed, and other particulars, which, he believed, would be of service to the House in legislating on the question.

CHARGES AGAINST THE POLICE.

Mr. MASLIN asked the Minister of Justice, Has the attention of the Government been drawn to a sub-leader in the *Lyttelton Times* of the 4th September, 1894, in which the following charges are made against the police, viz.: "If the police could only be persuaded to do their duty the hour of closing hotels would be a matter of some importance; but while they connive at all sorts of breaches of the law we can expect to get no advantage from the most drastic regulation"? Will the Government cause immediate and searching inquiry to be made into these charges, in the interests of all parties concerned? This, he held, was a question which affected all classes of society. If the article referred to had appeared in some scurrilous print he should not have troubled the Government with the matter, but, appearing as it did in the leading Liberal journal in the colony,—in a paper that was noted for its endeavours to do justice to all parties,—he considered the article would not have appeared unless there were very good grounds for the charges made. He trusted the Government would make such inquiries and prove the charges unfounded, or else remove those officers who were found to be guilty of such practices.

Mr. SEDDON said his attention had been called to this matter, and he had seen the sub-leader which had appeared in the *Lyttelton Times*. It was written in connection with the extension of the hours for keeping open public-houses from ten to eleven o'clock; but there was no doubt the last remark—which was as follows: "while they connive at all sorts of breaches of the law we can expect to get no advantage from the most drastic legislation"—was intended to refer only to breaches

of the Licensing Act, and must be read with the other part of the article. He was having the matter very fully inquired into and reported on, as it was the desire of the Government that the police should fairly carry out the law without being oppressive. There should be a reasonably fair compliance with the law, and he intended that that should be the case so long as the Police Department was under his control.

EDUCATION REPORT.

Mr. DUTHIE asked the Minister of Education, Whether he will cause the annual report on education, and the *Gazette* containing the classification of teachers, to be sent to the School Committees throughout the colony? School Committees were very desirous of deriving the advantages which were to be derived from the perusal of these reports and the *Gazette*, and it was only reasonable that they should be placed in the hands of these Committees. It was as well they should know what was going on in the colony in connection with education, and that they should have an opportunity of perusing these reports. He hoped the Minister of Education would see his way to comply with the request contained in this question.

Mr. REEVES said that, of course, the giving of these reports to the School Committees would be an expensive matter, seeing that there were so many School Committees in the colony. He quite agreed with the honourable gentleman that they should have these reports in their possession, and he would see that this was done in the future.

OLD SOLDIERS' CLAIMS.

Dr. NEWMAN asked the Premier, When the Bill dealing with the claims of old soldiers is to be introduced? During the recess the matter was referred to the Hon. Mr. Cadman, who was appointed to look into these claims. The session was now getting so far ahead that if something was not done very soon he feared this matter would be hung up for a year.

Mr. SEDDON said the honourable member might have prefaced his question with the following words: "Is it the intention of the Government this session to introduce such a Bill, and, if so, when?" He was unable to say.

Dr. NEWMAN.—This session?

Mr. SEDDON.—My answer is, No.

HOROWHENUA POST-OFFICE.

Mr. PIRANI asked the Postmaster-General, When the post-office at Horowhenua was closed, for what reason, and why no public notification was given of the fact? He would like to explain that a most extraordinary occurrence had happened in connection with this post-office. A post-office was established for many years at Horowhenua. It served many European settlers and three Maori pas. The family in charge of the post-office removed to Heatherlea, seven miles away, and, strange to say, they took the post-office with them, as well as all the letters for residents at Horowhenua, and nothing had been heard from May last

until inquiry had been made at the department as to the reason of the removal without any public notification being made. The letters of these unfortunate people had been sent to Levin to await there until the people for whom the letters were intended found out they had been sent to Levin. He would like the Postmaster-General to give him some reasons that would account for such a course being pursued in regard to an important public office like a post-office.

Mr. WARD said the post-office at Horowhenua had not been closed. The postmistress removed temporarily to some distance, and she forgot to notify the department of the fact. But the post-office had not been closed.

LUGGATE TELEPHONE.

Mr. FRASER asked the Postmaster-General, If he will take the necessary steps to institute a telephone-office at Luggate? Although there were not a large number of people residing in Luggate, yet there were a good many living in the vicinity, and there was a flour-mill there. It was twelve miles from any other telephone-station, and thus a great number of people were deprived of the advantage of telephonic communication, although the wire ran past their doors. There was no necessity for any great expenditure. He believed arrangements could be made to have the telephone-office at the mill in the locality.

Mr. WARD might say he was inquiring to see whether this could be done. The difficulty that had arisen was that this proposed station would be on the way between Pembroke and Cromwell, with the result that the messages passing would be heard in passing. If the difficulty could be overcome the service would be established.

FEATHERSTON COURTHOUSE.

Mr. BUCHANAN asked the Government, When they propose to proceed with the erection of a Courthouse at Featherston to replace the previous one destroyed by fire? He would like to inform the House that the Courthouse which was the subject of this question was the first erected in the Wairarapa many years ago; that it served a district comprising two towns and a large and important country district; that, although the Courthouse had been burnt down, and the necessary amount placed on the estimates last year for the erection of a new one, nothing, as far as he knew, had been done. He quite realised what he had been told at the Public Works Office—that there was a difference of opinion among the residents as to where the Courthouse should be erected. Of course these differences of opinion would arise, but he thought it was the duty of the Government, after investigation, to come to their own conclusions in a public matter like this, and decide where the Courthouse should be erected. He hoped to receive a favourable answer from the Minister.

Mr. SEDDON said he had a little list in the Public Works Office of the several buildings

which, according to the demand or necessity, should be erected. Now, this Courthouse had been on the top of the list for some time. The plans and specifications were ready, and had been ready for some time, but what had prevented the Government from dealing with the matter had been the division of opinion among the residents as to where and on what site the Courthouse should be erected. Well, he believed he had almost settled it on one occasion, and then the pressure came to be very great, and, as his colleague the Treasurer liked to hold on to the money as long as possible, the Government thought that by giving the residents time for reflection they would come to some arrangement among themselves. It appeared to him they were not likely to do so. So soon as he could get up there, if the honourable member would meet him at Featherston, they would go on the ground and settle it on the spot.

Mr. BUCHANAN.—Immediately after the session is over?

Mr. SEDDON.—Yes.

STRATFORD COURTHOUSE.

Mr. MCGUIRE asked the Government, When will they proceed with the erection of the long-promised Courthouse at Stratford? The Premier promised a deputation of the residents of Stratford that this work would be proceeded with without delay, in November, 1893, and it was surprising that nothing had yet been done. He would read, for the information of the Government and of the House, the following letter from the Justice Department:—

“Department of Justice,

“Wellington, 19th May, 1893.

“SIR,—Referring to your letter, dated 26th April last, on the subject of the Court at Stratford, I have the honour to inform you that I have given your representations every consideration, and have arrived at the following conclusions: (1.) I am of opinion that the accommodation provided in the proposed new Courthouse is not sufficient to meet the requirements of a growing district such as Stratford, and I have therefore decided to place on the estimates a sum sufficient to provide a building of larger dimensions. (2.) When the Courthouse shall have been erected I shall be prepared to consider whether sittings of the District Court shall be established. (3.) I have given instructions that fortnightly sittings of the Resident Magistrate's Court are to be held in future at Stratford, but I regret that I at present am unable to relieve the constable of the duty of acting as Clerk of the Court.—I am, &c.,

“A. J. CADMAN.

“F. McGuire, Esq., M.H.R., Hawera.”

A sum was placed on the estimates in 1892, and that sum was increased in 1893, for the purpose of erecting this necessary work. Again, in 1894, he received a letter from the Justice Department, as follows:—

“Department of Justice,

“Wellington, 15th January, 1894.

“SIR,—I have the honour to acknowledge the

Mr. Pirani

receipt of your letter of the 9th instant, with reference to the erection of the new Courthouse at Stratford, and, in reply, to inform you that the preparation of plans for the Courthouse is now in hand; but, as the Public Works Department is particularly full of building-works just now, it may be some time before tenders can be invited. No time, however, will be lost that can be avoided.—I have, &c.,

“A. J. CADMAN.

“F. McGuire, Esq., M.H.R., Hawera.”

A telegram was also received by the Clerk of the Stratford County Council saying that the work would be proceeded with in six weeks. That was at the beginning of this year. He would be glad if the Government would proceed with this work without further delay, and by this means to some extent fulfil the promises made by the Premier to the Stratford deputation. They had admitted that the work was an important and necessary one in 1892. How much more important and necessary must this work be, in a progressive town like Stratford, in 1894! The Government knew the district was a growing one. He therefore trusted he would receive a favourable reply to his question.

Mr. SEDDON said his reply to this question was this: He was aware that the communications which the honourable gentleman read had been sent. The Justice Department did recommend that a Courthouse should be erected, and on the supplementary estimates the amount required for the erection of the Courthouse was placed. But it was well known to honourable members, he thought, that, though the Government placed the money upon the estimates, they did not mean to expend the whole of the money and erect every Courthouse, make every road, and build every bridge at one time; it would be impossible to do so. He might tell the honourable gentleman that he (Mr. Seddon) had a little list, and that this Courthouse was well up on that list—in fact, very near the top; but they had a Courthouse in course of erection at Hawera, and another at New Plymouth, so that to be erecting three Courthouses at one time between Hawera and New Plymouth was a luxury not given to other parts of the colony, whose demands were quite as just as those of Stratford.

TELEGRAPH OPERATORS.

Mr. DUTHIE asked the Postmaster-General, —(1.) Whether he intends to take steps to relieve the block to the further advancement of the 137 telegraph operators now at the head of the Sixth Class? (2.) Whether it is true that many of these officers were in past years retained at the larger offices on account of proving especially expert, while men found to be less competent were transferred to country offices? (3.) Whether promotion has proved to be more rapid through these combined post-and-telegraph country offices, and that in many cases officers so transferred, as mentioned, have thereby received seniority and pay beyond that extended to their more competent compeers? He thought the Postmaster-

General would recognise the fact that the grievance existed which was detailed in his question. He thought the honourable gentleman would also admit that telegraph operators at an early stage of life lost a great deal of their efficiency, and consequently were unlikely to receive further promotion. It seemed extremely hard that they should so suffer for early proficiency, while other less competent operators were transferred to country offices, and thereby had obtained more rapid promotion. He trusted, therefore, that the honourable gentleman would see his way to give relief and perform an act of justice to the class of officers to whom his question referred.

Mr. WARD would answer the questions *seriatim*. In reply to the first part of the question, he must give the honourable gentleman the very same reply that he had given to the honourable member for Palmerston on the 14th instant, and that was that the real cause of the difficulty pointed out by the honourable gentleman was the fact that the service was not classified years ago. If classification had been carried out years ago these officers would not have been placed in a disadvantageous position. He might further add that the Government hoped to establish a system by which officers, for a long period of service, might be passed on to the next highest grade. With reference to the second part of the question, he might say that many years ago some of the best expert operators were sent to country offices, where their services would be more valuable in discharging the combined duties attaching to the telegraph- and post-office, and it must not be assumed that those who were sent to the country offices were less competent than those who remained at the larger offices. It was quite true that a first-class telegraph operator was not necessarily required at country offices. The Superintendent of Telegraphs had some time ago proposed that the pay should be in keeping with the capabilities of the officers, and that there should be a maximum gratuity for those doing first-class work, in addition to the regular salary. That proposal was declined at the time by the operators. He fully recognised the fact that being in the service for some years rendered a telegraph operator less fit for outside work than officers in other branches of the public service, and greater consideration required to be shown towards these men. He might say, generally, that so far as he possibly could improve the position of the telegraph operators he would be very glad to do so.

ADJOURNMENT.

Captain RUSSELL moved the adjournment of the House so as to elicit some more definite information about the Colonial Bank than the Colonial Treasurer had given in reply to the honourable member for Palmerston's question. The information which the Colonial Treasurer had given them just now, in reply to the honourable member for Palmerston, did not seem to him (Captain Russell) to go so far as it should, nor to be so satisfactory as the

House might desire. So far as he understood the honourable gentleman, he said the Government would take no notice of any transactions which might take place between the Colonial Bank and the Bank of New Zealand.

Mr. WARD.—No notice of outside rumours.

Captain RUSSELL. — Outside rumours! They would get some little information as they went along, he hoped. The honourable gentleman would take notice of no outside rumours in connection with the bank! But he (Captain Russell) understood him to say, also, that until the banks came to an understanding between themselves it would not be his duty to take cognisance of what transpired. That was the position which he understood the Colonial Treasurer to take up. Now, such an attitude as that might prove to be very unfortunate for the colony, and it was not, he thought, in conformity with the principle of the Bank of New Zealand Share Guarantee Act which was passed by the Legislature so hurriedly a month ago. It was, of course, an open secret—or, rather, it was no secret at all, because the whole of the public were aware of the fact—that the shares of the Colonial Bank were very rapidly rising in value, and that, of course, was a matter of considerable importance to the colony, if there was an amalgamation to take place between the Colonial Bank and the Bank of New Zealand when its shares were at a very much higher rate than they were now, that increase in the value of the shares being brought about by the fact of the proposal to ally that bank with the Bank of New Zealand, which had a Government guarantee; and therefore the colony was directly interested now in these transactions. In the 15th section of the Bank of New Zealand Share Guarantee Act it was, amongst other things, provided that there should be a President of the bank appointed, who should be independent—or, rather, he would take the Auditor first. An Auditor had to be appointed who was to be an expert, and the whole of his time was to be devoted to the business of the bank. This Auditor was to be independent of the Government, and independent of the executive of the bank, and the remuneration he was to receive, as well as that which the President was to receive, was to be paid by the bank. And here came a point to which he wished to draw the attention of the House. It was, that upon the report of the Auditor, confirmed by the President, the Government would have the power to refuse its consent to any business that appeared to be improper or unsafe, and the President had the power of veto over all transactions of the bank in so far as the guarantee of £2,000,000 was concerned. In clause 15 of the Act were these words:—

“If, upon the report of the Auditors, or either of them, confirmed by the President of the bank, it shall appear to the Colonial Treasurer that the affairs and business of the bank are in any respect improperly or unsafely conducted, he shall call the attention of the Directors thereto.”

The whole spirit of this clause, and of the
Captain Russell

whole of this Bank of New Zealand Share Guarantee Act, undoubtedly went to show that it was the intention of the Legislature, in passing that measure, that no important transaction of the bank should take place without the consent of the President and the Auditor, and that if there was any business which was in itself deemed unsafe they should report accordingly, and the President should place his veto upon it. He understood perfectly well that under another clause—clause 12—these new Directors, who were now to be appointed after a period of three months from the issue of the guaranteed shares, were not yet appointed, and therefore it might be held that it was impossible to appoint the President and the Auditor until such time as the Directors were appointed. But, if that were the case, surely they were in this unfortunate position: that the colony had guaranteed £2,000,000 of the bank, and that for a certain definite period. From what he could gather from the Colonial Treasurer the Legislature of the colony had no power whatsoever to interfere, however injurious or injudicious the operations carried on might prove to be. He was not supposing at the present time for one moment that the negotiations between the Bank of New Zealand and the Colonial Bank would be anything but satisfactory; but the fact remained that the colony, having guaranteed £2,000,000 to the Bank of New Zealand, should be in the position of knowing—being, as he contended, the principal shareholder of the Bank of New Zealand—all that was going on in this connection; and, if they had to wait until such time as notice was officially brought to the Colonial Treasurer, he ventured to assert it would be too late then for the colony to interfere, no matter how important the transactions might be. He might point to the fact that when the Bank of South Australia became absorbed or merged in the Union Bank of Australia the directors of the Union Bank held that they had power to enter into and complete any negotiations without reference to the shareholders,—that all they had to do was to go to the shareholders, after the whole business was completed, and tell them what had happened: that, whether the business was good or bad, the shareholders of the Union Bank had no power whatever to interfere and prevent the transaction. So, by parity of reasoning, it would appear now that we should be in the same position as the shareholders of the Union Bank of Australia were in—that was to say, the colony would have no power to interfere to prevent the transactions, however undesirable they might be, because the directors had the power absolutely to deal without their consent. Surely everybody would agree that that was not the position which the Legislature intended to take up in passing the Act. They intended to have officers appointed who should be entirely independent of the Government, and entirely independent of the bank itself, who would be able to put a veto upon any business which they deemed to be unsafe. Under these circumstances, it would appear that, owing to the

strength which the colony had conferred upon the Bank of New Zealand, the shareholders of the Colonial Bank would get infinitely more than they otherwise would, by alliance with a bank holding a State guarantee; and this fact imposed a responsibility upon the Government which it should fully realise. It was a very dangerous position, and one they should look fairly in the face; and, if it was held that under the Act they had no power whatever to interfere in regard to the amalgamation of the two banks, in his opinion it was the duty of the Legislature at once to pass some Bill which would confer power on the Government to appoint officers on behalf of the colony to see that any arrangement between the two banks was of a satisfactory nature to the colony before it was allowed to take place.

Mr. WARD might say, in reply to the honourable member, that any information which the Government did receive in reference to this matter would be at once communicated to the House.

Captain RUSSELL.—It might then be too late.

Mr. WARD did not think it could possibly be too late, if the banks meant business. If they did not, no communication would be made to the Government. The two banks might arrive at certain proposals which they regarded as satisfactory. The impression which the argument of the honourable gentleman conveyed was that, in connection with these proposals, the Bank of New Zealand was going to give a high value for the shares of the Colonial Bank. That was the essence of the honourable gentleman's argument.

Captain RUSSELL.—They have already risen 5s. in a week.

Mr. WARD said that might be so. So far as the Government were concerned, they could not help that. From what he was informed it was not a question of the Bank of New Zealand taking over or paying for the Colonial Bank shares. So far as the negotiations which had taken place were concerned, he might say they had not been in the direction of relieving the Colonial Bank shareholders. The negotiations, so far as they had been told to him personally, had been in the direction of arriving at such a solution of the matter as would render the Bank of New Zealand a stronger bank than it was, and, at the same time, as would do justice to the other institution. Whatever these negotiations were, they would not be confirmed until the President and the Auditor were appointed, and the new Directors of the Bank of New Zealand approved; and a meeting had to be held for the purpose of appointing these new Directors.

Captain RUSSELL asked what was to prevent it.

Mr. WARD could point out that there was this aspect of the question: Supposing the Bank of New Zealand were to disregard the obligations which the colony had taken in this matter, and decided to complete negotiations before the power of revocation could be exercised without conferring with the Government,

what position would it be in? The new President, when appointed, could absolutely veto every transaction.

Captain RUSSELL.—Every subsequent one.

Mr. WARD said he could absolutely veto any transaction they proposed to give effect to if the Government did not approve of the amalgamation of the banks in consequence of the liability it had undertaken in guaranteeing two millions to the Bank of New Zealand. He wanted to know if it was at all likely that those who were responsible for the conduct of the Bank of New Zealand were going to put themselves in that position. Certainly not. The Government were anxious to appoint the President; and, whatever was the position which the negotiations between the two banks were in at the present moment, the Government was in this position: Under the Bank Act, within three months of the passing of the Act, the head office had to be transferred to Wellington, and new Directors had to be elected here. Now, until the new President and the Auditor were appointed the ordinary business of the bank proceeded in the meantime under the responsibility of the President who was in England, and under the responsibility of the Directors there. And the functions of the new President and of the new Auditor, if appointed before the New Zealand directorate was formed, would be absolutely nugatory; they could do nothing. That was the position, otherwise the Government would have appointed them before; but in the meantime they would have no control over the business of the bank, which was carried on by the present directorate, which would, he had no doubt, be careful not to accept any large responsibility. The Government would have been glad to appoint the President and the Auditor before now, and they were only too anxious to do so. He repeated that, in an important matter such as this, the Government were not exercising any pressure of any description; and, as for the matter itself, it was an ordinary matter of negotiations between the two banks concerned; and it would be an impossibility, in his opinion, in view of the circumstances under which they were called upon to give the Bank of New Zealand a State guarantee, for that institution to agree to any negotiations of the kind referred to until the Government had approved of them: and the House had the assurance of the Government that nothing would be done in that direction until the House had been made acquainted with the circumstances and had had an opportunity of expressing its opinion upon them. He recognised that in an important matter of this sort there was only one interest that should be considered, and that was entirely the interest of the colony, and no other interest. He thought that the honourable gentleman would agree with him that, if there was any possibility—he was speaking now with a knowledge of what had taken place so far, although not officially informed of it—of these negotiations coming to a close without the assent of the Government or of the House, they would introduce legislation at once.

to prevent it. But there was no necessity for that, because he could give the House the positive assurance that nothing would be done until the Government in the first place agreed, and until the House in the second place agreed to ratify any proposal the Government submitted to it.

Mr. R. McKENZIE was very much surprised at the Colonial Treasurer getting up at the present stage and saying anything about this banking business. It was a very sore question with many people in the colony, and he thought it would be as well for the Colonial Treasurer to keep out of the matter pending further developments. He held in his hand a circular from a gentleman named Mr. John Murray, who, he supposed, was connected with the Bank of New Zealand, who asked for his proxy in connection with the election of Directors of the bank. Unfortunately for himself, he (Mr. R. McKenzie) had been a shareholder for some years. Personally he had a decided objection to Mr. Murray, whoever he might be, or whatever his position was in the bank, advising as to whom he should give his proxies to. If Mr. Murray was a servant of the bank, or of the colony,—the colony having guaranteed the bank to the extent of £2,000,000—he certainly was most strongly of opinion the Government ought to restrain Mr. Murray from influencing shareholders of the bank in the way he was doing. If the Directors were going to occupy an independent position they ought to be elected independently, and without any influence whatever being used. He might say there were five gentlemen recommended in this circular. Three or four of them were very old and intimate friends of his. He had no doubt they would make very good Directors; he was not going to say they would make the best possible Directors. He had also received circulars from other gentlemen who aspired to the position of Directors. He thought it was an invidious position for any gentleman who was connected with the bank or the Government to assume to make any recommendation at all to the shareholders as to who the Directors should be. The Government had the appointment of the President of the bank, who could veto all the acts of the Directors, and that ought to be sufficient control for the Government. He knew nothing of the negotiations which were going on between the Colonial Bank and the Bank of New Zealand. That was an outside matter which honourable members were supposed to know nothing about. But as to the election of Directors, he knew something about that, and he must certainly enter his protest against the manner in which certain things were being done in connection with that election. He did not consider it desirable that the Manager, or Chief Inspector, of the Bank should nominate his own Directors, and use influence to procure their election.

Mr. BUCHANAN said surely the Colonial Treasurer could not expect the House to be satisfied with the explanation he had given on this important question. The position was a very extraordinary one. The honourable

Mr. Ward

gentleman explained that at the present moment the bank was under the control of a President and Directors in London, over whom the Government had no power of veto whatever. He also said that the Government had not been guilty of any delay, because the time provided in the Guarantee Act when they could appoint a President with the necessary power of veto had not yet arrived. Then, the honourable gentleman went on to say that, if these two banks were to do anything so wrong as to amalgamate on any terms whatever, the President to be appointed by the Government would then step in and veto it.

Mr. WARD said he did not say that.

Mr. BUCHANAN said that was practically what the honourable gentleman said.

Mr. WARD said, No, it was not.

Mr. BUCHANAN said if the honourable gentleman denied it, of course he must accept the denial; but the honourable gentleman would surely admit stating the fact that the President and Directors in London were at the present time in full power, without any right of interference by the Government. The honourable gentleman could not deny that the Government was perfectly powerless.

Mr. WARD said legislation would have to take place before what the honourable gentleman suggested could be done.

Mr. BUCHANAN asked if the honourable gentleman would give the House that assurance based on the opinion of the Crown Law Officers.

Mr. WARD said, before an amalgamation between those banks took place, in his opinion, legislation would be necessary. He said that advisedly. What was more, he might further add that that was the opinion of those who were concerned.

Mr. BUCHANAN said the proper plan would be to make assurance doubly sure and bring down another surprise Bill, so as to put the colony beyond all danger of its interests being adversely affected by any amalgamation between these two banks. The honourable gentleman said that no negotiations were going on which would relieve the Colonial Bank shareholders of any present liability. On what authority could the honourable gentleman assure the House of that? And if he could give it to the House on reliable authority, of how much value would it be to the colony? The liability of the shareholders of the Colonial Bank was a matter of comparatively small moment. What honourable members wanted was an absolute assurance, on the highest responsible legal authority, that the interests of the colony would not be adversely affected. Would the honourable gentleman tell the House that he would bring down legislation to prevent all possibility of any amalgamation between these two banks until after the appointment of the President?—because at present there appeared to be no certainty that they could not at once amalgamate, and there was thus no guarantee whatever that the interests of the colony would not be adversely affected. The honourable member for Hawke's Bay had

pointed out that negotiations were actually going on, and that the possible advantage to the Colonial Bank might mean a disadvantage to the Bank of New Zealand and the colony.

Mr. WARD said the honourable gentleman must have a very poor opinion of the Bank of New Zealand people—who were the guardians of that institution—if that was his opinion.

Mr. BUCHANAN said that public opinion had arrived at the stage of believing that they were almost anything, judging by their past experience of the Bank of New Zealand; and he for one did not consider he would be doing his duty to the constituents who had sent him there, and to the colony at large, if he did not impress upon the honourable gentleman the duty which lay upon him and the Government of which he was a member to guard the colony's interests in this matter. He was not casting reflections on the Government, but a Government was liable to make mistakes like other people, and, if they committed a mistake in omitting a safeguard which should have been inserted in the Bank of New Zealand Share Guarantee Bill, they should be the first to acknowledge that, and honourable members should be the first to assist in putting that right, just as they assisted the Government in putting legislation through which they thought was necessary in the interests of the colony.

Mr. T. MACKENZIE.—We did not assist them.

Mr. BUCHANAN said he would not split hairs on the subject, but, if they did not assist them, they had placed no obstacle in the way of the Government taking a course which they thought right in the interests of the colony. Let it not be thought for a moment that he was asserting that it might not possibly be in the interests of the colony that these two banks should be allowed to amalgamate. That was, for the present, beside the question. He could very well conceive that the amalgamation of these two banks would be a good operation for the Bank of New Zealand, and also for the colony. But that was not the question. The real question was, whether these negotiations could be concluded before the colony could have any opportunity of protecting its interests. The House and the country would look to the Government to see that every contingency was provided for.

Dr. NEWMAN did not apprehend for one moment that the negotiations which had been going on for the amalgamation of the two banks would be completed until the new Board and the President had been appointed. The Treasurer said nothing could be done till legislation was passed by that House. He wanted the honourable gentleman to tell the House whether this legislation would involve the country in further liabilities. They knew perfectly well that the Colonial Bank was a pretty large institution, and was one which the Bank of New Zealand could not swallow in a mouthful, and therefore if the negotiations were carried out they might increase the liability of the Government. It seemed to him that they should be told by the Colonial Treasurer whe-

ther that would be so. If the amalgamation could be effected without further liability to the colony he thought it might be an exceedingly good thing. He would like to draw the Colonial Treasurer's attention to clause 10 of the first Guarantee Bill. There it was provided that the first million of the two million pounds should be dealt with in the manner which the Colonial Treasurer might approve. He wanted to ask the Colonial Treasurer whether that money was invested, and what had been done with it. He thought that was a question which should be answered, and considered by the House before the session ended.

Mr. ALLEN understood that when the honourable member for Wairarapa was referring to the amalgamation of the banks the Colonial Treasurer interjected that the directors of the Bank of New Zealand were wise enough to look after their own interests and see that a fair settlement was effected.

Mr. WARD said he did not say that. The honourable member for Wairarapa was making a statement, and he interjected that, if that was so, the honourable member had a poor opinion of the Bank of New Zealand in regard to these negotiations.

Mr. ALLEN said that was practically the same thing. The honourable gentleman said that the honourable member for Wairarapa had a poor opinion of the capabilities of the Directors of the Bank of New Zealand in looking after their own business. He understood that was what was said. What he wanted to know was this: It might be that the Bank of New Zealand Directors, if left entirely to themselves, would look after the interests of their own business; but he saw it stated in the newspapers—he did not know whether to believe it or not—that the negotiations were started at the instigation of the Government. He wanted to know if the Treasurer or any of his colleagues had had anything to do with the starting of any negotiations for the amalgamation of these two banks.

Mr. BELL said he was personally very much gratified at hearing what had been said with regard to the necessity for legislation. He had asked a question the other day on this point, and the Treasurer either could not or would not answer. He now understood that any proposed amalgamation would be laid before the House in the shape of a Bill; and that was entirely satisfactory to him personally.

Mr. G. HUTCHISON understood the Treasurer to say that he was aware of negotiations being on foot. How did it come that the Government had been made aware of negotiations being on foot between the two banks? This could only be, so far as he could understand, because the Government was being asked to acquiesce in some arrangement of the kind.

Mr. WARD.—No.

Mr. G. HUTCHISON said, although the Government might not have approved of any proposals, they meanwhile would be giving encouragement to negotiations so as to commit the House to something it ought not to be asked to do. He thought the position was

more serious than some honourable members were prepared to believe. He thought it was quite clear that such an important change as indicated ought not to take place without the sanction of the House, and that negotiations ought not to proceed to a point which might commit the colony; and, seeing that the meeting of shareholders of the bank was to take place this month,—and he presumed the Government President would be appointed about the same time,—it should be officially intimated to the Bank of New Zealand—which, in the circumstances, the colony had a right to address—that no further steps should be taken towards amalgamation with any other bank until the colony was officially in a position to take part in the negotiations. He was sorry to think the Government were making themselves a party to the negotiations, for he could attach no other meaning to the announcements made by the Treasurer.

Mr. REEVES.—We are not making ourselves parties in any way.

Mr. G. HUTCHISON said the Ministry were being consulted; the Treasurer indicated that, and he (Mr. Hutchison) could attach no other meaning to such a statement than that the Treasurer was aware of the terms of the proposed amalgamation. He (Mr. Hutchison) hoped the colony would not be committed to any negotiations in respect to the future amalgamation of the two banks; the colony was too deeply pledged to allow any further risk to be run.

Mr. SEDDON said the Colonial Treasurer had made the position very clear. The Government had not suggested the amalgamation.

Mr. ALLEN.—I did not say it had. I said it was so stated in the newspapers.

Mr. SEDDON said honourable members should always make a certain allowance for statements that appeared in the papers. If all that had been said was simply in consequence of what had appeared in the papers, he had very little anxiety, and it would cause his colleagues less anxiety. Was it to be supposed that those who had the management of the Bank of New Zealand, knowing the position in which that institution had been placed through the action of the Legislature, would for a moment think of carrying out an amalgamation with another banking institution without first informing the Government and having the sanction of the Government for such a proceeding? Such a supposition was not doing credit to those who had the charge of the bank's affairs. He should think, as a matter of fact, they were not prepared to do anything of the sort. They were moribund, and were simply acting till the permanent Directors were appointed, and until the Government President was appointed and the Government Auditor. If honourable members thought that, in the interval between the appointment of the Directors, the President, and the Auditor, this amalgamation would be completed and carried out by both banks without the sanction or approval of the Government, they must know very little about banking

Mr. G. Hutchison

business. He presumed that nothing, at any rate, would be done until after the President was appointed and a new Board elected. Then the responsibility would come on the Government, because, with the President being directly in connection with the Colonial Treasurer, the Government would have to be a consenting party. The Treasurer had told the House very plainly that, the House being in session, it would not be done without the House being informed of it; and, whatever was done in this respect, the Government must take the responsibility, and would be prepared to do so.

Mr. BELL said, the Colonial Treasurer said it would be done by Act. The Premier now said, "If the House was in session."

Mr. SEDDON said, if nothing was done before the prorogation, and it was considered necessary to bring the matter to a settlement in the interval before the House met next year, would it be right to hang the thing up till then, or should the Government, to put it plainly, take the responsibility? He said the Government would be prepared to take the responsibility. He was not in the House when the Treasurer spoke. If he had stated that he would bring in an Act this session—

Mr. BELL.—No, he did not say that.

Mr. SEDDON.—Then, what was the use of interjecting that he did?

Mr. BELL.—I did not.

Mr. SEDDON.—Then, what did you say?

Mr. BELL said what he had said was that the Treasurer stated that nothing would be permitted to be done by the Government in confirming the negotiations until the House had been first consulted. He said that on two former occasions, and that day had added that the institutions thought that an Act would be necessary, and that an Act would be the form in which the resolution would be submitted to the House.

Mr. SEDDON said that was the honourable gentleman's interpretation of what the Treasurer had stated. He would undertake to say that half a dozen other members would interpret it otherwise. But the plain issue was, Were the Government officially aware of the proceedings for amalgamation in such a way that they could take notice of them? He said they were not officially aware. They had simply received, so far as he knew, information that negotiations were pending, and that advances had been made in respect to amalgamation. If it should arrive at the stage that the Government were consulted, as the Treasurer said, they would inform the House. The Colonial Treasurer had asked him to reply to a question put by the honourable member for Wellington Suburbs as to what amount of the two millions authorised to be raised had been received by the Bank of New Zealand. Only half a million was subscribed, and the balance was not payable till the 26th October.

Mr. PIRANI said that the main point of his question had not been at all referred to during the debate. His reason for asking it was that if the amalgamation were arranged

—no matter on what basis it came before the House for ratification—they would probably then be told that if they refused to ratify the arrangement entered into by the bank they would be doing an injury to the bank, and therefore they would be compelled to pass such amalgamation, simply because they would be afraid of injuring the interests of other banks. That was an unfair position in which to place the House. They had been put into that position by passing the Bank of New Zealand Share Guarantee Act, and a single instance of the kind in one session was quite sufficient for the House. Of course, the Treasurer had said that if there was an amalgamation it would not be on the basis of the share-values—that was, so far as he knew. But anybody who knew Mr. John Murray and his career with the Bank of New Zealand would not for a moment believe that he would be bound by any such assumption either of the Colonial Treasurer or of any member of the House. To let a little light into the sort of man they had to deal with, who was really the power behind the bank, he would read a short extract from a letter from the late President of the Bank of New Zealand during the time Mr. Murray was general manager. It would show how cautious honourable members should be in accepting any statements which came from such a source. Mr. Buckley said,—

“In May of last year I wrote to Mr. Murray, who was then in London, and referred to ‘the false position the shareholders’ committee had been placed in owing to the real state of the bank’s affairs not being more fully disclosed to them before they made their report in October, 1888.’ Replying to me on the 3rd July, 1889, from London, Mr. Murray said, ‘What I desire is to see the bank carried on without further dislocations, in the hope that time will set it right. This, for two reasons: first, the interests of shareholders, who would suffer grievously if it were reconstructed, which would be a difficult and perilous process; second, for the sake of the committee, because, whatever may be said of the mistaken estimates of some managers, the new shareholders will certainly say: ‘The committee, after six months’ investigation, and having all the materials at their disposal to enable them to arrive at a conclusion, made a certain report as their report. If it turns out that they merely accepted, without check or verification, the estimates of managers, of what real use were they, except to create a wrong impression?’ Mr. Murray significantly added to this extraordinary paragraph these words: ‘Please note that I am not now raising or discussing that question. All I aim at is to point out to you how important it is, even from the committee’s point of view, that the bank be carried through and the question not raised at all.’”

4.0. Now, when a gentleman made an admission like that in an official communication,—that any means to an end were justified,—any proposals made by that gentleman should be received with caution by the House. He thought one necessary safeguard

in the amalgamation of these banks was that the share-value at the time of amalgamation should not be taken at the pretended market value. They knew that all sorts of means were adopted to place values on shares in the market when it was necessary, and he thought, if any such false basis as that were to be taken as the basis of an amalgamation, the Colonial Treasurer would be quite justified, even if he was not sure that such arrangements were pending, in passing an Act through that Assembly to prevent any such arrangements from arriving at a consummation.

Mr. BUTTON thought most honourable members would admit that he should know something of the constitution of the Bank of New Zealand. As to the question of any amalgamation taking place without an Act of the Legislature, he distinctly affirmed that it could not be done, at all events, on any scheme that had suggested itself to his mind; and he knew the honourable member for Wellington City, although he laughed, would not like to risk his opinion in an opposite direction—that there was any power whatever in the Bank of New Zealand Act or in the deed of association to allow any amalgamation to take place, at all events, in the direction the honourable member for Palmerston had indicated. An amalgamation between companies which were corporate bodies could only take effect when there was power either in the charter, or in whatever the constituting instrument might be, to effect that purpose. And the honourable member could easily understand that the Bank of New Zealand Act, passed many years ago, and founded on the provisions of the deed of settlement, which was very old, and was drawn up long before such a thing as amalgamation was thought of, contained no provision whatever to give facilities for such amalgamation. He asked his honourable friend the member for Wellington City (Mr. Bell) to get up in the House and controvert the opinion he had given—that no amalgamation scheme that could be suggested could possibly be carried out without being *ultra vires* of the present bank’s deed of settlement and Act; and he held that it would require special legislation to meet the case, if any amalgamation such as the honourable member for Palmerston feared was to take place.

Mr. T. MACKENZIE said it appeared to him that the position taken up by the last speaker was the correct one—that they could carry out no amalgamation without legislation. But what he wished to refer to particularly was what had fallen from his honourable friend the member for Palmerston. He should have thought the House never would have been disgraced by a quotation from Mr. Buckley, because that man’s career, and his conduct towards the Bank of New Zealand, were such that his remarks ought never to have been brought forward on the floor of the House. The honourable gentleman was in the habit of paying compliments and attaching certain qualifications to various members of the House. According to that honourable gentleman, he (Mr. T. Mac-

kenzie) was the humourist of the House. He was glad to hear it. At any rate, he would not like to be considered the wasp of the House, which position the honourable member for Palmerston occupied. The wasp was an insect which carried a considerable amount of poison, but which added nothing to the store of honey. With regard to the Premier's remarks, he thought that honourable gentleman did not make at all a clear statement of what had been said by the Colonial Treasurer in his absence. He thought the business of the Bank of New Zealand and the Colonial Bank was a matter which required to be gone into very carefully. They had committed the colony to a very serious undertaking by indorsing, if he might so call it, a promissory note for £2,000,000, and in approaching the subject of amalgamation it should be approached with very considerable caution.

Captain RUSSELL did not wish the House to understand that he had any objection to the amalgamation; as a matter of fact, he did not know whether it was a good thing or not; but what the House required was information. The only information that was at all reliable—and he had great pleasure in relying upon it—was the information just obtained from the honourable member for Auckland City (Mr. Button). Of course that honourable gentleman's opinion was worth having. The information which had been obtained from the Colonial Treasurer seemed to him to amount to nothing at all. Even the honourable gentleman's own colleague said that the House would take six different views of the matter after that honourable gentleman's speech.

Mr. WARD.—He did not say the House. He said six members.

Captain RUSSELL.—Well, he said six different members would take different views, and if any meaning was attachable to that it was that the statements of the Treasurer were so obscure that it was impossible for any one to understand them. The honourable gentleman's reply to a direct question ought to be so straightforward that no six members of the House could possibly take six different opinions about it. Take the opinion of the honourable member for Auckland City (Mr. Button): whether his opinion was right or wrong, he had, at any rate, been understandable by everybody, and he had relieved his (Captain Russell's) mind to a great extent; but even that opinion he was not going to receive with absolute credulity. It might be that the honourable gentleman was right; but the fact remained that there were negotiations going on between two banks, and those two banks might make arrangements which were not beneficial to the colony; and, if the negotiations were so far advanced as to be submitted to the Government, he had no hesitation in saying that, in his opinion, they would have a surprise sprung upon them, and they would know nothing whatever about this amalgamation until the whole business was through.

Mr. WARD.—That is not so.

Captain RUSSELL said, at any rate that

Mr. T. Mackenzie

was what he expected. The Treasurer went on to tell them that the President, when he was appointed, could veto anything that had been done. That was quite absurd. He could veto anything that might be done in the future, but he could not possibly veto anything that had been done in the past.

Mr. WARD.—I did not say that.

Captain RUSSELL said it was impossible to know exactly what the Colonial Treasurer did say; but he followed the honourable gentleman pretty closely, and he had endeavoured to apply a couplet of Dryden's to the position,—

Not Heaven itself upon the past has power,
But what has been has been, and I have had my hour.

That was what Mr. Murray would say after the amalgamation had taken place in a satisfactory manner. He maintained that the Legislature had no right to abrogate its power by allowing the Government to enter into these negotiations. It was all very well to say that what would be done would be submitted to Parliament; but it was possible that Parliament might be prorogued before the transactions were completed, and if that should be the case the matter would be left in the hands of the Government entirely; and, at any rate, he had not sufficient confidence in the Government to allow them to hold these negotiations in their own hands. If it were in the hands of some astute professional banker he might have confidence in his judgment, but he had no confidence in the judgment of the members who sat on the Government benches to safely enter into negotiations with such astute persons as the inspectors and managers of the Bank of New Zealand and the Colonial Bank. There was another point he would like to touch upon, and that was that the Colonial Treasurer led them to understand that the Government had not been approached by the Colonial Bank. Of course, he knew that was the case; but there was a very general impression that the Colonial Bank was endeavouring to get the Government to assist them through the Bank of New Zealand. Report went further, and even said that assistance had been granted by the Bank of New Zealand to the Colonial Bank to the tune of £100,000; and what was, then, the position of the colony?

Mr. WARD.—That is not correct.

Mr. G. HUTCHISON.—How does the Treasurer know it is not correct?

Captain RUSSELL said, Yes—how did the honourable gentleman know? At any rate, one heard those rumours, though members could get no official information on the subject, and did not know on what line the Government would go in the event of such proposals being made. The only information they had on the subject was from the man in the street, whose information, though it might not be worth much, was a great deal more than they could get from the Government.

Mr. WARD, by way of personal explanation, said that in any matter of such importance as this it was to be regretted that an honourable

gentleman occupying such a responsible position as Leader of the Opposition should so misrepresent a man occupying the position he (Mr. Ward) held.

Captain RUSSELL hoped the honourable gentleman would explain what he had been misrepresented on.

Mr. WARD said the honourable gentleman, in his remarks, conveyed an impression that the Premier had said that the statement he (Mr. Ward) had made to the House might be understood in half a dozen different ways. What the Premier did say was that half a dozen different members would not have understood it as the honourable member for Hawke's Bay had done. Then, again, the honourable gentleman misrepresented what he had said regarding the President. Whether that was intentional or not he did not know. He (Mr. Ward) did not state that the President could veto something that had been done. What he did say distinctly was that, if what the honourable member for Wairarapa stated was possible to be done with regard to the amalgamation, the President, when he was appointed, would be able to exercise his power of veto against anything that might be done. The idea he had in his mind at that moment was that there was only £500,000, of the two millions of money guaranteed by the State, paid to the bank; the other £1,500,000 was to be paid on the 26th October next; and consequently the important power of veto of the President, in guarding this colony in regard to the expenditure of that money, would be exercised before the money was paid to the bank, because the President would be appointed before the 26th October, and if the bank were to do anything against the wish of or without the concurrence of the Government they would run the risk of the refusal of the President, on behalf of the colony, to the investment or use by the bank of the £1,500,000. His honourable friends on the opposite side assumed that the Government were not going to do what was right in the matter; but, as a matter of fact, they were trying to do what was right. He thought he ought not to be misrepresented when he told the House what the position was. He had told the House distinctly that in his opinion legislation would be necessary, and the honourable gentleman practically said he would not accept his statement to that effect; but he accepted the statement of an honourable member on the Opposition side of the House, who said the same thing that he had stated. What did that show? It showed that the honourable member would not, because it did not suit his purpose, take his (Mr. Ward's) word, but he immediately afterwards accepted a statement to the same effect because it was made by the honourable member for Auckland City (Mr. Button), a supporter of his own. He thought it would be admitted that when in an important matter like this one gave a straightforward answer to the House on the question raised there ought to be no attempt to twist that in the manner the honourable gentleman

had done. It was a very important matter, the responsibility of it the Government recognised, and as soon as negotiations—

Captain RUSSELL.—This is a long personal explanation.

Mr. SPEAKER.—Do you object to this Ministerial explanation of an important matter being made?

Captain RUSSELL.—No.

Mr. WARD continued: As soon as negotiations on this important point reached the stage at which they would come to the Government the Government would consider the negotiations, and the House would be at once advised. As he had said before, the responsibility of the whole position would be upon the Government, and upon the House. Further than that he could not say. He thought it was to be regretted that the honourable gentleman would turn this into a party matter for the purpose of making an attack upon the Government.

Captain RUSSELL wished to make a personal explanation. If he had misrepresented the honourable gentleman he had done so unintentionally. He had read the words as he had taken them down. Of course he did not profess to take them verbatim. The honourable gentleman said, "The House would take six different views of what the Hon. the Treasurer had stated."

Mr. SEDDON.—I did not say anything of the sort.

Captain RUSSELL said the honourable gentleman must have said something of the sort, or he could not have taken it down; it must have been very close to that. However, that was immaterial: his object was—

Mr. SEDDON.—I take this opportunity of saying that I did not say so, and I hope the honourable gentleman will withdraw the statement.

Captain RUSSELL.—Then, as to the other point about the President and his veto, the words he had taken down as used by the Colonial Treasurer were, "The President can veto anything that now takes place." Those might not be the precise words, but that was the impression: and on the question of legislation the words were, "Legislation will be necessary, in my opinion, before amalgamation takes place." His opinion! What was his opinion worth? Nothing at all.

Mr. WARD.—I did not say "my opinion."

Mr. SEDDON said he was glad he had come in when his colleague was denying the statement attributed to him. He wished now personally to say that he had never used the words stated by the honourable member, and which he said he had taken down at the time.

Captain RUSSELL.—What did you say?

Mr. SEDDON said if the honourable gentleman would listen he was generally pretty plain, and was fairly well understood; but there was a peculiarly-constructed pen used by the honourable gentleman, for he had never known him to take down anything straight yet. He did not wish the action of the Government or what he stated to be misrepresented or misunderstood, and he did not wish the honourable

member to be misunderstood. If the honourable gentleman and those who acted with him wanted to create distrust, and to bring down both banks—

Mr. SPEAKER said that this was not personal explanation.

Mr. SEDDON said he wished to understand from the honourable gentleman what he wanted and what he was striving to bring about.

Mr. BUCHANAN wished to make a personal explanation. The Colonial Treasurer appeared to complain that he had misrepresented him when he had ridiculed the idea that the President of the bank could veto an amalgamation which had been effected within the limits of the law.

Mr. WARD said his statement was that the honourable member for Hawke's Bay had done so.

Mr. BUCHANAN said he had made a similar statement, and he wished to put himself right. He had taken the honourable gentleman's words down, and though he had torn them up the words were verbatim "that the President could veto an amalgamation" already effected. He understood it in that sense, and regretted if he had misunderstood it. He merely wished to clear himself of any charge of misrepresentation.

Mr. WARD was glad to hear the honourable gentleman say that. He, however, wished to say, with all due respect, that he did not think the honourable gentleman could take down his words verbatim, or that any other honourable member of the House could, unless he took them in shorthand.

Motion negatived.

RATING ON UNIMPROVED VALUE BILL.

Mr. WARD moved, That the amendments made in Committee be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

On the question, That the Bill be now read a third time,

Mr. PIRANI said,—Before this Bill is read a third time I wish to give the honourable member for Dunedin City (Mr. Earnshaw) an opportunity of putting himself in a proper position in reference to a remark I made in Committee on the Bill. On the debate in Committee on the Bill the honourable gentleman inveighed very strongly against those members of the Liberal party who were supporting this measure, and said that we were doing all sorts of dreadful things in passing such a measure through the House. He also said that land-nationalisation appeared to be the platform in connection with the Government supporters, and he put the whole matter so clearly that it is only fair to himself and to the House that I should read a couple of extracts from the pledge the honourable member signed in Dunedin, from the Workers' Liberal Committee. The first is, "State ownership, under direct Ministerial control, of land"—that is, land-nationalisation. The other point he signed was, "The exemption from taxation of all buildings in boroughs, and levying a taxation

on land only according to value, whether built upon or not." That is the pledge he signed.

An Hon. MEMBER.—In what year?

Mr. PIRANI.—In the 1893 elections. The honourable member stated I did not know the reply he sent as well to this Committee with reference to this pledge; therefore I give him an opportunity of stating to the House and the country what his reply really was, if he thinks it necessary to do so.

Mr. EARNSHAW.—Mr. Speaker, I decline to reply to the impertinence of the honourable member for Palmerston.

Mr. SPEAKER.—I must ask you to withdraw that word.

Mr. EARNSHAW.—Certainly I will withdraw the word "impertinence." Yet I only recognise the right of my constituents, those who sent me here, to demand explanations of my opinions expressed upon the floor of this House. I have received no intimation from them that I did anything against any pledge of mine; and I shall be quite prepared to explain my statements when I shall have the pleasure of meeting them at the end of the session.

Mr. BUCHANAN.—Before the third reading is put I wish to put upon record what I have already stated in Committee, that never in this House, during my experience of it, has a Bill been presented by a Minister of the Crown who has shown himself so absolutely ignorant of its provisions as the Treasurer has proved himself to be, and of the effect it would have on the ratepayers of a district where any local body adopted it. And as the discussion on the Bill proceeded it was clearly evident that members generally were so misled by its attractive title—namely, "Rating on the Unimproved Value"—that they had never taken any pains or care to ascertain for themselves what its real effect would be. Even prominent members of local bodies in the country districts have admitted that they had not properly understood the provisions of the Bill, and I was satisfied, as it went through Committee, that they regretted the attitude they had taken up; but, finding it impossible to draw back from the position they had originally taken up, they went with the Government in a body and voted for the Bill. I gave several illustrations showing the glaring injustices that would arise. The Treasurer affected at first to ridicule the conclusions I had come to; but it speedily became evident he was quite unable to point out any incorrectness whatever in what I put before the Committee—namely, that the result in the case of a great many ratepayers would be to greatly and unjustly increase the amount of rates they would have to pay. In one of these examples I proved up to the hilt that, whereas under the present law equal rates were rightly paid by two fully-improved properties of equal value, yet under the provisions of this Bill the position would be that one of these properties would have to pay twice and a half as much as the other, and that there was no justification for such a wrong. The essence of what I put before the House was this, in fact: that where

Mr. Seddon

the owner of poor land had done his duty in improving the property he held to the very utmost extent possible, he would be punished in a most unjust way; and that, whereas the aim of any system of local government should be that the contributions by the various settlers in a given district should be somewhat in proportion to benefits received, under this Bill they would be altogether on the reverse principle, and settlers deriving most benefit from the expenditure of the rates would be called upon to contribute much less than those who were benefited the least. The Treasurer must admit he was absolutely unable to controvert what I put before the Committee.

Mr. WARD.—No; I do not admit that at all—quite the opposite.

Mr. BUCHANAN.—The Committee discussion showed quite clearly that he was entirely unable to controvert the cases I quoted. If there is reasonable room for improvement on a property, no matter whether the land be good, bad, or indifferent in quality, then I for one would be the first to assist the Treasurer in framing his Bill so that the improving man should be encouraged, and that the man who does not improve should be made to pay a fair contribution to the rates. But I have clearly shown that in the case of poor land, where no further improvement can be made without losing money, the rates under this Bill will be heaped up to an almost intolerable degree. The Treasurer and other members of the House pointed out that the provisions of the Bill were optional, as if that in any way met the case. Why, Sir, the optional character of the Bill is merely an opportunity to the more numerous section of the ratepayers to shift a portion of the burden off their own shoulders; because, as I pointed out in Committee, a preponderance of voting-power in any country district must rest with those who occupy the best and consequently the most improvable land, and the ratepayers who occupy the indifferent and bad land must always be in the minority. So that, despite what the Treasurer says, the optional provisions of this Bill are a direct invitation to the more numerous class of the ratepayers to plunder those least able to pay, and who get the least benefit from the expenditure of the rates. Then, again, I pointed out that, although credit was undoubtedly due to those settlers who improved the most, that would not apply to the purchaser of a piece of land already improved by the previous owner, and yet the provisions of this Bill would apply to him just as though he had been the actual improver of the section. It was also pointed out to the honourable gentleman in Committee that, whereas the Bill of last year provided for a maximum rate of 8d. in the pound, there was no limit whatever in this Bill to the injustice that would be committed on ratepayers occupying the worst classes of land. The honourable gentleman attempted an explanation which conveyed no meaning to anybody—namely, that the provision of last year was found to be absolutely unworkable. It

was surely due to the Committee and to the House that he should explain how it was found unworkable. The senior member for Wellington City (Sir R. Stout) urged that a safeguard of this sort should be put into the Bill, but, as usual, the majority of the Government was unscrupulously used to crush the attempt. Then, I asked the honourable gentleman at whose demand the Government had brought in a Bill like this. The answer, as is usually the case, was very unsatisfactory, and merely consisted of the vaguest assertion that the Government had received numerous requests that such a Bill should be brought in. In contradiction of that I informed him that the North Wairarapa County Council had issued circulars to all the local bodies in the colony, inviting expressions of opinion from them upon this important subject, and I have here a table showing the returns to that circular. Replies were received from sixty-five local bodies out of a total of over 270—County Councils, Road Boards, Town Boards, and Harbour Boards. I do not include the Domain Boards, of which there are a good many in the colony. Of the sixty-five who replied, there were only thirty-two of the total number who were favourable to rating on the unimproved value. Twenty replies were indefinite, and thirteen unfavourable. No doubt the Government had received requests from theorists and other irresponsible people to introduce a Bill of this kind, and one of them is well known to be a certain gentleman who was unsuccessful in getting returned as a member of this House not a hundred miles from Wellington, notwithstanding the efforts of two leading members of the Government.

Mr. WARD.—Name.

Mr. BUCHANAN.—I do not choose to give the name: the honourable gentleman knows very well to whom I allude. It is all very well to call out "Name," but I refer those honourable gentlemen to the Government for the necessary information, because they know very well to whom I allude. He is not infrequently to be seen behind the chair, is the well-known recipient of many fat commissions, and acts generally as dry-nurse to the Government. We have been accused of stonewalling this measure, but I would ask the Premier whether the Bill would have now arrived at its third reading if he himself had been in opposition. Not a bit of it. We know that he would have made it absolutely impossible to pass it at all. It is therefore quite idle to say that we on this side of the House have stonewalled the measure in any way whatever. Stonewalling is one thing, but it is quite another to do as we have done—to resist in a fair manner the passing of a measure which will affect unjustly and injuriously a very large number of the settlers of this colony. I have, however, done my duty in regard to it, and the responsibility for its results must rest with the Government.

Captain RUSSELL.—I wish to indorse the remark which was made by the honourable member for Wairarapa, that in the long debate which took place in Committee on this ques-

tion there was no attempt either directly or indirectly on the part of any member on this side of the House, as far as I am aware, to delay this measure. The desire was to place what we believe to be the defects of the Bill fairly before the House. And, even supposing the debate was long, which by no means do I admit, the subject-matter of the debate was of very great importance to the colony; and holding as we do that the Bill will be injurious, especially to the settlers in the early days of their colonisation, we should have departed from our duty had we not raised a protest to the very utmost of our ability against it, even if it might be to the dissatisfaction of a Government who are anxious to push on their work. We do not come here to get through a certain number of clauses during a certain number of hours; but it is our business, as far as we possibly can, to have the whole principle of the Bill thoroughly discussed. But in the case of this Bill it was unfortunate. It was introduced for second reading at a late hour of the evening, and then the mover of the Bill very readily allowed it to be postponed to a subsequent occasion. Consequently, when the Bill came up again for the second reading it was proceeded with in a somewhat disjointed manner, with the result that the debate was not so concise and thorough as it might have been had the Bill been pushed through at the one sitting. There were many questions of principle discussed when the Bill was in Committee which ought not to have been discussed on such an occasion. The Treasurer was unable to explain the meaning of one particular clause, on which the whole of the principle of the Bill was discussed, inasmuch as the interpretation clause—clause 2—conveyed the whole principle of the Bill. Sir, the result of the debate last night, few will deny, disclosed the fact that many honourable members, if it had not been for party ties, would have gone back upon what they had said in previous speeches on the subject. The honourable member for Wairarapa pointed out many illustrations, and it is a great pity that his speeches in Committee were not reported, so that the country might really know what the effect of this Bill will be. I should like to point out, as an instance of the necessity for a thorough discussion on this Bill, that clause 9 is a very involved one, and it is a clause as to the real meaning and probable effect of which the Premier and Colonial Treasurer held quite opposite views. At this very moment, if you discuss with honourable members what the probable effect of clause 9 will be, you will find that most of them agree to differ as to what the real meaning of the clause is. I have contended all along, and no argument I have heard will ever change my opinion upon the clause, that the result of it will be antagonistic to the interests of those persons whom I believe the Government wish to advance—that is, the *bonâ fide* settlers—by exempting improvements from local taxation. The position is this: that when a man is first taxed under this system the taxation is as heavy as it ever will be—that is to say, if he

Captain Russell

pays only upon the unimproved value—and the fact is undeniable. The capitalist who has been in beneficial occupation of his property for two or three years uses the roads very much more than his less fortunate neighbour, and he will be deriving an infinitely larger income from the property, but he will pay a very much less sum in taxation in proportion to the benefits he receives. The principle of equality of sacrifice is abandoned altogether in this Bill. There is a clause to which I drew attention in Committee, and I will refer to the subject again—that is, with regard to the subject of the unimproved value of the land, less the value of all improvements thereon—and I have as an illustration a case where the land in its natural state would be absolutely valueless. For instance, land in our immediate neighbourhood was under water twenty years ago, but by the energy of man it has been reclaimed from the sea, and valuable improvements in the shape of valuable buildings have been placed upon it. Therefore the whole of the land is all improvement; but still, of course, we know that it will be subject to taxation upon what people call the unimproved value, whereas the unimproved value was absolutely nil. This goes to show that there is no true definition of what the unimproved value is. Then, again, if we take another illustration of two persons—we will take two in any country township—the one a prosperous merchant or professional man who is able on a half-acre or quarter-acre section to build a large residence, whilst the other is the two-roomed cottage of the labouring-man. The unimproved value in both instances is the same, but the one may be deriving an income of one or two thousand pounds a year whilst the other has to depend upon his daily wage for subsistence, and yet in both cases they will pay the same rates. There may be honourable members who are anxious for a single-tax, but I do not believe that any single-tax can possibly be fair on this basis, as it seems only right that the people who derive the most benefit from the roads, who are the best able to pay for them, should be liable to more taxation than the man who receives no benefit. Under this system of taxing the unimproved value you will have instances over and over again of the small tenement being rated at exactly the same sum as the handsome house or warehouse which stands alongside; and whereas the owner of the latter may be deriving from a large distributing business, and therefore from the wear-and-tear of the roads, a large income, the man living in the small cottage simply walks up and down, scarcely uses them, but has to pay as much in rates. Another point worth noticing, and which is really of some importance to persons living in the country, is that the exemption of improvements is likely to further inspire the feeling of annoyance which now exists in the country in regard to the payment of charitable rates, because under this Bill practically the whole burden of charitable aid will be thrown upon the land; other property will be exempt altogether. The effect will be that, as the values of improvements in the towns are rela-

tively larger than those in the country, the country will pay still more than it now does towards the maintenance of the poor collected in the towns. I have always been one of those who say that the poor naturally gravitate towards the towns, and that it is the duty of the country to bear a fair share of the rates for the maintenance of those poor; but I have very great difficulty in getting persons to recognise that it is fair that the country should pay a much larger share of charitable aid than persons of greater wealth in the cities.

5.0. Throughout the Bill, from first to last, it seems to have departed from the principle of equality of sacrifice and the principle of making those pay who are best able to pay. The Bill is unsolicited by the country, and amongst its numerous defects the chief one is the thoroughly inequitable system of rating which it introduces.

Mr. THOMPSON.—I am quite pleased with what the last speaker has said in reference to the question of charitable aid. There is no doubt in my mind that if the charitable-aid rates are levied on the unimproved value the burden will fall upon the shoulders of those who are least able to bear it. There is another feature in the Bill which I should like to point out to the Minister, and which, I think, is the weak point of the whole Bill. Probably the honourable gentleman may be able to get some amendment introduced in the Upper House to meet it. Under this Bill it is a fact that the taxation will fall severely upon the new bush settlers, who will be taxed on their land to an extent that will be almost crushing; and I should like to point out to members of this House who represent the Province of Wellington that, inasmuch as there are in this province a large number of settlers of that description, and as great numbers of these men have taken up new land during the last few years at very high values, and as little of this land has been cleared or stumped, the immediate effect of adopting this measure will be that their taxation will increase considerably in amount; and yet this is the very class of settlers who are least able to bear taxation. Whether the Minister can bring in an amendment in the Upper House to meet that difficulty I do not know; but I can assure him that if he looks at that part of the Bill seriously he will see it is going to have a crushing effect upon the new bush-settlers. There are many of those settlers who have taken up large sections of poor land, and this will be the means of compelling them to throw up their land, provided the Bill is brought into operation in their district. I have nothing more to say. I have supported the Bill myself, I believe there are many districts where it will do very well, but I can say that in many other districts it will not work at all well unless some alterations are made in it.

Mr. HALL.—The honourable member for Wairarapa said that this Bill had not been asked for by the country. I can quite understand the honourable gentleman saying this, because he represents a constituency that is

directly and particularly interested in the Bill not coming into force. The honourable gentleman knows perfectly well that if this Bill comes into force the bulk of the taxation will come on the large owners, whereas hitherto it has been thrown upon the small owners. His attitude on the matter from beginning to end has been in the interests of one class alone, and that class the large owners. If the honourable gentleman represented a district such as mine he would have known it has been wished for, and that there has been a constant desire to have our present system of taxation altered, so that it may be taken away from the man who improves and put on the back of the man who does not improve and who still possesses these large holdings. Now, it has been admitted on all sides that it was a constant source of alarm, whenever a man made improvements on his property, that when the valuer came round he would place so much annual assessment for rating on those improvements. If a man were kind-hearted, and wished to build a decent house, so that his family might be comfortable and might be brought up in a respectable manner, he was immediately taxed so much more annually for the improvements he made. Is it fair to the man who gives employment, and who tries to bring up his family respectably, that he should be constantly burdened with heavy taxation in this manner? If you look upon it from that point of view you will see that this Bill is a step in the right direction. It has been urged by the honourable member for Hawke's Bay that speculators would receive benefit from this Bill coming into force. Now, I will urge that the speculator is the man who will be particularly affected. As I said last night, I have again and again known cases in which valuable areas of suburban and rural land have been held for a considerable number of years without being improved, and they are, of course, a great loss to the country, in not being made reproductive; and it is the settlers in the neighbourhood who have improved their properties that have to pay for the increased value that is given to those other properties which lie idle and unused. Therefore, Sir, I give my hearty support to the Bill.

Mr. McGUIRE.—I have but a word or two to say upon this Bill at this stage. It is a Bill which I intend to support. It is a Bill which I fear will be very oppressive on the Crown tenants who are taking up land now for the first time, and have very limited means for the purpose of improving their holdings. What they want are roads and bridges, and, if the Minister of Lands will not provide them with these necessary requirements, the Bill will be very oppressive upon them, because the tax will be on the unimproved value, and if the Bill is an advantage to any body of settlers it certainly will not be any advantage to those special settlers who are put on the land by the Government without means. It will very seriously affect them indeed. I have always thought it was wrong that settlers who work early and late to make comfortable

homes for themselves and their families, fencing their land and building houses, should be taxed more than their neighbours who, perhaps, are sluggards, and make no improvements. Therefore it is on this account I support the Bill. There were many arguments brought forward by the honourable member for Wairarapa which I feel that the Colonial Treasurer, who has charge of the Bill, has left unanswered. And why were they not answered?—Because they were unanswerable. However, the district which I represent will, I dare say, be only too happy to have a Bill of this description, because the land in that district is capable of great improvement; but I can well imagine that in other districts where the land is of a very much mixed nature great injustice will be done to many farmers. Now, the Bill is a permissive one, and I suppose it will only be adopted in those districts for which it is suitable. Under these circumstances, therefore, I support the Bill.

Mr. WARD.—I think my honourable friend who has last spoken has just given us a very good idea of the way in which he can argue on both sides at once. He says that some of the arguments adduced by the honourable member for Wairarapa against the Bill are unanswerable, yet at the same time he is going to support the Bill. Now, Sir, in future, when I want to convince the honourable gentleman, I have only to endeavour to use arguments that may be controverted, and I shall therefore feel that I shall have his support. After what he has said the honourable gentleman ought not, consistently, to support the Bill at all. Now, the honourable member for Wairarapa has evidently a very bad memory to-day. He sat up very late last night.

Mr. BUCHANAN.—No; I have a very good memory.

Mr. WARD.—The honourable gentleman then ought not to have sat up late last night, for there seems to be an amount of acidity in his speech which is to be regretted. What is it we find the honourable gentleman doing? We find him actually stating that when this Bill was in Committee of the House I failed to answer him on certain points. I think the honourable gentleman must really have a defective memory. As a matter of fact, sixteen times on one clause of the Bill the honourable gentleman spoke, and sixteen times I got up and answered him, and, I am sure, convinced every one else but him. Now, if the honourable gentleman accuses me of not answering his arguments, may I not with equal force reply that his receptivity is small? Might I not say that without meaning to impute anything offensive to the honourable gentleman? He accuses me of sailing round these things. Now, I maintain that I did nothing of the sort in Committee. I wish to put this on record now. The honourable gentleman gave us a case which he said was unanswerable. He gave us the case of a property £9,000 in value and with improvements to the value of £6,000 upon it, and another case of a property £9,000 in value with improvements to the value of £1,500 upon it,

and he went on to point out the rates they would be called on to pay. He argued that, although they were of like values, they would be rated at different amounts. He contended that that was unfair; but all through the piece he very conveniently omitted to state the acreage of either of the properties to which he referred. I asked him to do so in Committee time and again, and finally extracted it from him. Now, as he says I did not answer him, I put on record my reply to his questions in Committee: that in the case of the two properties, the one valued at £9,000, one of them having an area of fifteen thousand acres, while the other has an area of two thousand acres, that land also costing £9,000, I pointed out that in the case of the property with an area of fifteen thousand acres it would have been valued at the rate of 10s. an acre as the cost, and could readily be improved up to another 10s. an acre. This is the property which has only fifteen hundred pounds' worth of improvements upon it.

Sir R. STOUT.—The case might be that of a glacier.

Mr. WARD.—Well, if the case was that of a glacier I can understand the honourable gentleman being so cold and uninteresting on the matter, and I dare say in that case the honourable gentleman would be right; probably it was therefore a glacier that he referred to. Now, in the other case, that of the property of two thousand acres valued at £9,000, it could very easily be worked at a very much lower cost than the property with the area of fifteen thousand acres; and, taking these two properties valued at £9,000, 6 per cent. upon the investment would realise for each of them £540 a year to the owner. I pointed out also to the honourable gentleman that the man who had two thousand acres of land, and who had spent £6,000 upon improvements, would be subject to a greater annual charge, representing the depreciation of improvements, than the man who had expended £1,500 in improvements on the 15,000-acre farm.

An Hon MEMBER.—What about the original payment to the owner?

Mr. WARD.—In the one case it would be 10s. an acre, and in the other case it would be £1 10s. an acre. I pointed out that the man who paid £1 10s. an acre would require to draw from his property a larger return per annum in order to obtain the same proportionate amount from the investment than the man who had only paid 10s. an acre on the 15,000-acre farm. He could not answer that; but he said the Minister who introduced the Bill did not understand it. But such is not the case. In fact, the honourable gentleman himself knows so very little about this Bill that he had to go to the Tax Department in order to get posted up in this matter.

Mr. BUCHANAN.—No.

Mr. WARD.—I say the honourable gentleman conferred with the officers of the Tax Department.

Mr. BUCHANAN.—I deny that.

Mr. WARD.—Of course, if the honourable gentleman denies it, I at once accept his denial.

Mr. McGuire

In that case I should have liked, for his own sake, that he had conferred with the officers of the Tax Department, because, if he had done so, we should probably have had a much more intelligent statement of facts from him than we did have. Now, with reference to the case which the honourable gentleman referred to, what does it mean? It means that the honourable gentleman wants to put a tax on industry. He wants to tax the man who has spent £6,000 on improvements; he wants to tax him, and to prevent him and others from improving their land. Now, the honourable gentleman says the Bill is not necessary. He takes the case of the Wairarapa North County Council; but he forgets that it is altogether optional with these bodies whether this system shall be introduced.

Mr. BUCHANAN.—One of the thirty-two.

Mr. WARD.—The honourable member wanted to know in Committee whether there had been any demand for this Bill, and I answered the honourable member. The words which the honourable member used were that irresponsible people were prompting the Government in this matter, and he indicated that we were influenced by some extraordinary personage: to whom he referred I do not know, but he said this personage was in the habit of sitting behind the chair. I asked the honourable member to name him, but he did not do so. Why did he not do so? Does he mean the gentleman who used to represent the District of Mount Ida in this House?—for that gentleman has been sitting behind the chair for the last day or two. I do not know to whom the honourable gentleman refers. Does not the honourable gentleman know what is going on in this country? Does he not know that there have been meetings in various parts of New Zealand, urging that this system of rating on the unimproved value should be adopted in the country? If he does not know that, he ought to know it. Does he not know that there are petitions before the House urging that this system should be adopted?

Mr. BUCHANAN.—Debating societies.

Mr. WARD.—Does the honourable member mean to say that the Municipal Corporation of Palmerston is a debating society, that those of the Town of Invercargill and the Town of Westport are debating societies, and that the hundreds of settlers in various parts of the colony who have been urging the adoption of this system are all irresponsible people? All I can say is that, in my opinion, the irresponsible people have been communicating with the honourable member, because responsible people are anxious for the change, and have urged upon the Government ever since we have been in office that the option should be given to the local bodies of adopting this system. I say, absolutely, that, whoever is the personage to whom the honourable gentleman alludes as being in the habit of sitting behind the chair—the dry nurse of the Government, as he said—I have never been approached by him, nor have I received communications from him in reference to this subject, nor have I been prompted by him to bring in this measure. It is because there has

been a desire expressed by local bodies from one end of the colony to the other in favour of their being allowed the option of introducing this system that I have brought it in. Why is the honourable gentleman so anxious to have a tax on improvements? Why do we have the drunkard fined? It is to deter him from becoming drunk again. If the honourable gentleman is anxious to impose taxation on improvements he must be anxious to deter improvements being made. In Committee the leader of the Opposition, the honourable member for Hawke's Bay, stated that this legislation is legislation favourable to the capitalists. If our legislation is favourable to the capitalists, clearly capital must remain in the colony, and therefore in this latter respect I was glad to hear the honourable gentleman say what he did, because honourable members on that side of the House are not in the habit of approving of anything in this respect which the Government does. I was very sorry to hear the honourable member for Wairarapa state that I ridiculed him in Committee. I do not think the honourable member meant that.

Mr. BUCHANAN.—What I said was that the honourable gentleman ridiculed the case which I put before the Committee, but he was afterwards compelled to admit that he could not contradict it. I did not accuse him of ridiculing me.

Mr. WARD.—I accept the honourable gentleman's statement, because I would not attempt to ridicule him, or any one else; but he stated that I ridiculed the conclusions which he came to, and that I could not reply to them. He mentioned two properties of the same value which would be differently affected under this measure, the owner of one of which would have to pay £16 1s. 5d. more, and the owner of the other £16 1s. 5d. less, than formerly.

Mr. BUCHANAN.—In other words, two and a half times.

Mr. WARD.—I pointed out, in Committee, that the man who paid £16 1s. 5d. less was the man who had expended £6,000 in improvements upon his property; and I say the man who spent £6,000 in improvements deserves more consideration than the owner in the other case mentioned by the honourable member. But the honourable member has mentioned an extreme case.

Mr. BUCHANAN.—A common case.

Mr. WARD.—I can prove that it is not a common case. I say the honourable gentleman took two extreme cases; he took the case of a property which was improved to the extent of £7 10s. per acre; and in the other case he took a property of 6,000 acres, with improvements to the extent of 5s. per acre only. I showed the difference in taxation in those two cases. Why does he not take the valuation of improvements and the unimproved value in the various towns and in the country? Why does he not take the total value of improvements and unimproved value, as set forth in the report submitted to the House? The case of the Government Insurance Office has been referred to; but that is a fine building, upon

which much money has been spent, and is not in the position of thousands of other buildings in the city. The honourable member who referred to this case ignored the value of the ground per foot, and selected an individual case for the purpose of condemning the whole system. That is an unusual way of dealing with the matter. I say that such illustrations could be urged against any system or proposal, whether of taxation or otherwise, which might be submitted. Let me take the case which the honourable member for Hawke's Bay refers to. Let us consider the case of the reclaimed land, upon which various public buildings have been erected. It was contended that the unimproved value of that land cannot be arrived at by the assessors, and therefore they cannot deduct the value of the improvements. I would ask, what is it that has added to the value of that land in the first instance? Is it not the numbers of people who are resident in this city, who are causing a demand for further land to be provided, to enable buildings to be erected on it for the purpose of carrying on business? Undoubtedly it is. What has given the unimproved value to the land in the country? Is it not the population in the country as a whole? Most undoubtedly it is. It is argued that that reclaimed land, for instance, must be treated exceptionally, but I would ask, supposing an upheaval took place and that land was thrown up where the harbour now is, does the honourable gentleman mean to say that the value of that land could not be ascertained for taxing purposes? The honourable member says, in the case of the reclaimed land, it is to the handiwork of man that the credit should be given for the increased value. I contend, however, that the case alluded to is not one which shows that this system ought not to be introduced. The honourable member for Wellington City pointed out in Committee that there is no limitation to the rate intended to be levied under this Bill. I do not want to tell my honourable friend that he does not understand the Bill, but I am afraid he does not understand it. He will admit that under the existing system of rating there is a limit in the boroughs and counties. In some counties there is a limit of 1½d. in the pound, and in others 4d., whilst in boroughs the rating may go up to 1s. 3d. in the pound for general rates. I pointed out in Committee what the effect would be. I pointed out that, if in a county the limit of rating under the present system is 1½d. in the pound, if it is decided to adopt the system of rating on the unimproved value, in order to get the same revenue the amount of 1½d. would have to be increased until it was capable of producing the same amount as the rate of 1½d. did under the former system. If they get the same revenue in this way, is it not clear that the maximum limit is still maintained? When the honourable gentleman says that the rating-power under this Bill is unlimited, I can only say that is not so. If you fix a maximum under this Bill it might happen that you would prevent some local bodies obtaining the revenue they require. For instance,

Mr. Ward

take the Borough of Naseby: In their case they will require ten times their present rating-power, if they adopt this system; whereas the County of East Taupo, if it levied a rate, would only require 3/8ths of its present rating-power. If the proposal of the honourable member was agreed to, we might just as well shelve the Bill. The honourable member for Hawke's Bay says there was no attempt on the part of the Opposition to say anything unnecessary when this Bill was in Committee. I do not say there was, but I think the Opposition discussed the matter very fairly and fully. For instance, the honourable member opposite made sixteen speeches on one clause.

Mr. BUCHANAN.—That is an error.

Mr. WARD.—I was assured by an honourable member on this side who is a first-class mathematician that he carefully recorded each time the honourable gentleman spoke, and when he finished he said to me, "Just fancy! he has spoken sixteen times!" And I replied that he might have said all he said in one short speech. The honourable member for Hawke's Bay says this Bill is going in the direction of the single tax. I would point out that that statement is absurd. The single-tax goes a great deal further and involves a great deal more than anything contained in this Bill. It means that we are to dispense with Customs revenue. This proposal simply means that a man who does not improve his land shall pay more in proportion than the man who improves his land. I say that the argument will not stand, that we are going in the direction of the single-tax. I do not, however, wish to say anything against the effort of the honourable member for Inangahua, who is so enthusiastic in his efforts to convince people in regard to the single-tax. This Bill is optional for the various local bodies in New Zealand to adopt. I do not think we ought to be afraid to trust the people in this matter. I do not think we ought to be afraid to trust them to exercise their intelligence and say whether this system of rating on the unimproved value of land is to be adopted by them or not.

Bill read a third time.

GAMING BILL.

Mr. SEDDON, in bringing up the report of the Conference on this Bill, said the Conference had agreed that clause 7 should be deleted, and that, in lieu of the Colonial Secretary making the regulations, the Managers on behalf of the House had agreed, on their part, to make it "the Governor in Council." He moved, That the report be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

GOVERNMENT RAILWAYS BILL.

Mr. SEDDON.—Sir, I rise to move the second reading of the Government Railways Act Amendment Bill. I have already stated that this Bill is one of the most important measures that have been submitted to the House this session. The amount involved is something like £15,000,000 of the people's property, and with such a large interest involved

it is necessary, I think, that every information should be given to honourable members on the subject, so that in voting upon this Bill there can be no doubt left as to what the mind of the people's representatives really is. I shall take the somewhat unusual course of first of all explaining the details of the Bill, and then give reasons why I think the Bill should pass or should be read a second time. If honourable members will look at the Bill they will see that, in the first place, it is intended that a member of the Executive Council, a Minister, should have a seat on the Board of Commissioners with the three Railway Commissioners for the time being, and on that Board he would simply sit as an ordinary member. He would act as Chairman of the Board, and have an ordinary vote as well as a casting-vote; but the power of veto, which was originally provided under the Bill introduced into the House before, has been withdrawn. Under this Bill a Minister would simply sit on the Board, just in the same way as a Minister sits on the Public Trust or Government Insurance Board, as one of the Commissioners. I therefore wish to make it plain what the position of a Minister really would be. There is an alteration with regard to the term of the appointment of the Commissioners, and there is also an alteration in regard to the removal from time to time, if necessity arises, of the Commissioners. In this I have almost followed, Sir, simply what is the law now in the neighbouring Colony of Victoria, where it has been found necessary to pass legislation in respect to the Railway Commissioners. The power of taking land for railways, which originally vested in the Commissioners, will, should the measure become law, vest in the Minister for Public Works. Necessity has arisen for that being done, inasmuch as we found that lands had been taken which, in the opinion of the Government, will not be required for many years for railway purposes: in fact, lands have been taken which, in the opinion of the Government, never will be wanted for railway purposes. At the same time, the lands bring in a revenue to the Commissioners of a very large sum, something like £10,000 or £12,000 a year; I believe, in fact, as much as £18,000 a year has been received for rents from leases of railway lands. I say that that revenue was really not railway revenue at all. It has been really land revenue, and it should properly be credited to the Territorial Account. Now, the reason why necessity for this has arisen was owing to what was contemplated in Dunedin, when it was proposed to take a strip of valuable land, which would have entailed on the colony the payment of very heavy compensation, without the Government being consulted. I say no power should be given to irresponsible persons to commit the colony to the payment of large sums of money in compensation, without the consent of the Crown or without the Crown being consulted.

An Hon. MEMBER.—You call them “irresponsible persons”?

Mr. SEDDON.—Yes, I say, advisedly, the Commissioners are irresponsible. Now, I have

given reasons why the Government thought the provision of section 4 was necessary. The next question I come to is the power to fix the sites for stations. There has been some clashing between the Railway Commissioners and the Public Works Department. The Public Works Department have the construction of the railways, and the construction is not complete unless the line is properly furnished with the necessary goods- and passenger-stations. Under the original Act the fixing of the sites for stations rested with the Railway Commissioners. If the Commissioners did not agree to a site which the Engineer-in-Chief thought was a proper site for a station there would immediately be friction. I myself think that the construction of our railways should vest in the Public Works Department. As the Bill is drafted, the Railway Commissioners are to be consulted, but the responsibility rests with the Public Works Department. In clause 6 honourable members will find provision for the Commissioners furnishing amended estimates if desired. As the law stands there appears to be a doubt on the point, and this paragraph has been drafted to remove that doubt. At present there is no provision that the Commissioners must supply details of the proposed expenditure when the estimates come before the House. It was doubtful whether the House could insist on information being supplied as to the number of employes engaged, and the amount paid to the employes; and, if pressed, he doubted very much whether the House could enforce that being done. However, as it happened, the Railway Commissioners have not demurred to bringing down their estimates in the amended form. I think when there is a doubt with regard to our legislation that doubt should be removed. As regards contracts for supplies, I have no complaint to make against the Railway Commissioners; but, in the neighbouring Colony of Victoria, I think no less than half a million pounds' worth of supplies, without contracts, has been ordered from Home, and the material will not be required for many years; and that has been obtained upon open orders by the Commissioners. I think, therefore, it is right that we should provide against any contingency of that kind, if we are going to continue the Railway Commissioners in power. Then, as regards the increase of salaries, that is provided for in clause 9 of the Bill, under which all salaries of over £300 a year are to be approved by the Governor in Council. Section 10 simply limits the power of the Commissioners to grant leave of absence in the same way as is provided in the Civil Service Act. I do not think it is right to give six, eight, or twelve months' leave of absence to officers under the Railway Commissioners, and when I say that no less than six of the principal officers of the Railway Department were absent at one time on leave,—some simply on account of long service, and for other different reasons,—I think the House will agree that it is time we should make the conditions as regards leave of absence to railway officers the same as the conditions under

the Civil Service Act. Grave doubts have arisen as to whether such a large body of workmen should not have some Board to which to appeal. Under the Postal Regulations we have given power to a Board, upon which the employes are represented, to settle matters affecting that department; and the Government have come to the conclusion that it would save a great deal of time and trouble to members of the House, who so frequently receive petitions for presentation to the House, if a Board were appointed to which the employes could appeal in case of dispute. It would be a matter of great satisfaction to the employes, and I do not think the Commissioners themselves would dissent from it.

80. At the same time, I do think that it is a proper thing under the circumstances to do, and provision has been made accordingly. Now, under section 12 of the Bill the House will see that the Government have taken a departure from the legislation as submitted last session. Last session the first Part of this Bill was practically submitted, and that was submitted to the country at the general elections. But if I should voice the opinion of the House, and particularly that of the Government supporters in the House, I should say the majority of them are in favour of absolutely and at once taking over our railways.

An Hon. MEMBER.—Why not do it?

Mr. SEDDON.—I have said that there are difficulties in the way, and these difficulties are of a serious character. Of course, all reforms, to remain, must come gradually, and we asked in the previous measure, and should have been very glad to accept, so much as this, but it was rejected in another place. We had, of course, the general elections, and we must take it, at all events, that the people of the colony are determined that there shall be a change in respect to the control and management of our railways.

An Hon. MEMBER.—No.

Mr. SEDDON.—There is no doubt upon that point, at any rate. The only change, as far as the Commissioners are concerned, is that they have been appointed for nine months, so as to give an opportunity to the House to express an opinion by Act upon this question. Of course, if a majority are in favour of the provisions made in this Bill it would only mean the extension for another year, and with the Minister sitting with the Commissioners. We should then see how that would work. If it worked well and smoothly, and to the advantage of the country and the people of the country, and of our railway system, then we could continue it. If it did not, then the power would be in the House, without any further trouble, to express its opinion by resolution. Of course there will be, no doubt, exception taken to that, because it is giving power to one branch of the Legislature to decide the momentous question.

An Hon. MEMBER.—To either branch.

Mr. SEDDON.—Yes; as the Bill is drafted either branch of the Legislature will be able to carry resolutions in respect to taking over the railways. But I take it that, in a ques-

tion of administration, this House is more in touch with the matter under review, and would no doubt be the one branch of the Legislature that would express its views, and express them, in my opinion, in such a way that there would be left no doubt whatever as to the views of the people upon the subject. Provision is made in the Bill as to what would occur in case the House should adopt such a resolution as is contemplated by section 12. I have now briefly sketched the Bill to members of the House, so that they understand it. I now come to the question as to the necessity for passing the Bill. First of all, I have said that there are fifteen millions of public moneys invested in our railways. I say that the safety and convenience of the travelling public are involved. I say, further, that the promotion of settlement and the encouragement of our local industries are also involved, and that these matters are of great moment to the people of New Zealand. Sir, the railway service may be divided into three parts. Two, of course, require expert knowledge. I refer to the locomotive branch and to the traffic management. Then, of course, with these branches, there is the policy question, and I say that it is in respect to the policy question in the working of our railways that there ought to be direct parliamentary control. I say the Railway Commissioners have it in their power to increase the value of land. They have it in their power to promote settlement or to prevent settlement. They can decide, according to the tariff fixed, whether industries shall be promoted or whether they shall be crushed; and in respect of some industries—our timber industries and stone industries, and as regards the carriage of manures—they are concerned in promoting settlement and increasing the productions from the soil, and in bringing coal to market. I say the policy in the past of the Railway Commissioners, even the policy of the present Railway Commissioners, is absolutely defective.

An Hon. MEMBER.—No.

Mr. SEDDON.—Absolutely defective. Now, we were asked, in passing the Bill in 1887, to do so because the other colonies had passed such a measure. It has been proved incontestably now that it is a failure in Victoria. There you have had a lawsuit, I suppose, unparalleled in the history of any country. There you have had the Press of the colony and the Chairman of the Railway Commissioners in conflict, and I suppose both will be impoverished as the result of that lawsuit, and great exposures have taken place. Any one who reads the evidence that was taken at the trial must come to the conclusion that the Commissioner system has been a failure for railway control there, and it has cost that colony very many thousands of pounds. While it has been a direct loss to the colony, the next question is, What has been the indirect loss to the country at the same time? I find the same thing even in New South Wales. You have had in the Legislature there charges made—and I think actions for libel have also been brought—by members of the House, and inquiries made as between the

Mr. Seddon

Commissioners and the members making the charges. It is true the Commissioners were acquitted, and I think rightly so; but there you have the conflict; and I say where there are, under circumstances such as these, irresponsible persons dealing with large public properties, without any State control, there is danger to the State: and, Sir, it is a slight upon the democracy of the country. Now, I may be told of the position of railways in England. Sir, in England we have the experts there to look after the traffic management and locomotive branches of the railways; but they have, too, a board of directors. Now, the board of directors there must be to these experts in the management of the railways what the members of this House, representing the people of New Zealand, would be to the management of the railways in this colony. Yes, I say the directors represent the shareholders. The people of New Zealand are the shareholders here, and the members of this House are the directors. There is no getting away from that. What do the directors bring to bear? They deal with the policy questions. They know what the tariff should be, and guide and direct that. They know where to promote trade and passenger-traffic and goods-traffic, and their knowledge as commercial men is of immense benefit to the railway exports. Now, I say that here in New Zealand our experiment has been a failure. It has not been, I admit,—I may say, to the credit of our Commissioners,—a great failure; and comparing New Zealand with the rest of the colonies the management of our railways here is favourable, and in the result New Zealand comes out the best of any of the colonies. I will say that in justice to those who have been our Railway Commissioners. All the same, I say the experiment has proved a failure. Has there been a reduction in the cost of working the railways?

An Hon. MEMBER.—Yes.

Mr. SEDDON.—Sir, if you look at the estimates you will find the estimates went up steadily. You will find that the payments made—you may scarcely believe it, but the other night you passed in five minutes over three-quarters of a million of money, and, with the exception of myself, there was not a single man in the House who knew one jot of what we were passing. At all events, though in the aggregate there was a reduction in the railway estimates, yet, at the same time, there were a considerable number of salaries increased on those estimates. I had inquired into the increases. These increases, I think, under the circumstances, were warranted. But, Sir, there is this that I desire to call attention to, and that is that, compared with last year's estimates, with an increased staff there was an absolute reduction of £8,000 upon the estimates made by the present Railway Commissioners. And, if they had gone as far as I think they ought to have gone, there could have been £12,000 of a decrease in comparison with the estimates, without impairing the efficiency of the New Zealand Railways, and without endangering the travelling public, without in any

way causing inconvenience, and at the same time without touching the wages of the employes on the railways. I, Sir, have very little doubt, myself, that, taking the ramifications of our railways, taking the expenditure in connection with certain branches of that service, the House, if it had direct control, and had gone into the matter carefully, would have seen that there could have been still further reductions made. Now, I wish to say this: that the appointment of the new Commissioners has proved that what the Government said was correct—that there could be reduction. Though there has been, and must necessarily be, with the increase of population and an increasing traffic, an increasing expenditure; yet in the face of that there is a reduction of about £8,000: and, of course, there was an increased length of line given over to the Commissioners during the last year.

Mr. G. W. RUSSELL.—They are working the workshops only five days a week.

Mr. SEDDON.—What I allude to is this: the decrease in our estimates; that is what I am alluding to. Now I come to the question as to whether the Government was justified in making a change in the *personnel* of the Commissioners. My reply is, Yes. I say when the Railways Bill passed in 1887 the Legislature never intended that Mr. Maxwell should be a Railway Commissioner; and I felt also this, and the Government were assured that such would be the case: that a change was necessary, and that if no change had been made there would have been no reduction. With the change came the reduction, and the working of the railways quite as efficiently and as well as they were worked previously. I do not wish to say, and shall refrain from saying, anything further than that the Government were justified in making these changes; and I believe, myself, that the changes are beneficial. Sometimes men get it into their heads—and some of the Commissioners got it into theirs—that no one could work the railways, and that no Minister, and no one else, could work them except a certain individual. I think we have proved very conclusively to this House that we have done right. Do the members of this House, or does any member of this House, believe that New Zealand has not sufficient intelligence to enable them to govern New Zealand just as well as we who are here to-day? I believe that, like the Railway Commissioners, we should never be missed. Now, it is very strange, but it is a fact, that of the thirty-eight members of this House who voted for the Railways Bill in 1887, on the motion of Mr. Fish, when he moved to report progress—I say, of that thirty-eight who voted for that Bill there are only ten in the House now, commencing with the honourable member for Bruce and ending with the honourable member for Otaki. That, Sir, is very significant. It shows that they went against public opinion; it shows they were not representing public opinion. They have disappeared; whilst of the fourteen who voted for the railways remaining under the control of

the people, nine of the fourteen are in the House at the present time. I think that is very significant. Now, Sir, I ask the question, has there been satisfaction as far as the employés of the railway are concerned? And I have no hesitation whatever in saying there has been grave dissatisfaction. I say that if you take the Postal Department, or any other branches of the working of our State matters, you will find a general feeling of content; but, as regards the railways, there was a general feeling of discontent from one end of the land to the other; and in many instances, I have no hesitation whatever in saying, the men had good grounds for their discontent. It was not the Commissioners who were to blame, but the officers in the various districts, who became tyrannical because the Railway Commissioners had no chance of dealing with those matters. And that was the real condition of affairs a few months ago. I am glad to say the feeling of discontent is now somewhat allayed, and the employés are somewhat more content, and feel satisfied that Parliament will do justice to them, as Parliament has done to other branches of the public service. I mean to say that, where such a large body of men are concerned, you must be very careful and firm, you must have regulations, and you must enforce those regulations, or otherwise you will have abuses; and in some instances no doubt the Railway Commissioners and railway officers were right, but in many cases they were far from being just and equitable to those employed. I ask honourable members this question: Is it right you should have your railway-trains going from point to point with trucks empty—the same wages going on, the same fuel being burnt, without the slightest difference to the extra cost of the rolling-stock?—for so you find empty trains going day by day; and alongside your railways you find traction-engines, bullock drays and wagons, carrying goods and produce that ought to be carried on our railways. In addition to that, a heavy cost is put upon the ratepayers of the district. If it was a business-man who had charge of the railways, if there was a director of these railways, this thing would have been put a stop to years ago. It should never have existed. But, Sir, they have fixed a certain tariff rate. For instance, now, take the timber carried from Eketahuna: it costs much more to bring it to Pitone and to side-stations than to bring it to Wellington—the difference being caused by the running back and forward between Wellington and Pitone. It took some considerable time before the Railway Commissioners would reconsider this and deliver it at the way-side stations. Take, again, the line from Stratford to Hawera. There the drays were carrying firewood, and the roads were ploughed up carting it, the trains going empty, and this cost going on month after month. These are not the only instances: and we have cases also as regards the passenger-traffic. I say there needs to be commercial capacity and experience brought to bear in connection with our railways; otherwise their management will

Mr. Seddon

be disastrous to the country. Sir, I say those connected with the timber industry are complaining; I say those connected with local industries are complaining; I say our farmers are complaining; and I believe there is a general all-round complaint against the system that has hitherto obtained. Then, I say, we have had objection after objection in the House, deputations of members asking for redress, and I think that everything points in the one direction. Now, I come to the larger question. My time is limited, and I must not trespass, but I will say this: I will ask honourable members to answer the question—Is the democracy of New Zealand incompetent to govern itself? Are the people of this country incompetent to govern the country? My answer is, We are not. I say that those members who say they will refuse to allow a Minister to go on this Board—those who say we ought not to take over our railways—say, in effect, that they have very little confidence in themselves, and have not the confidence they should have in those who sent them here. The Legislature is extending the State functions. We have now the Post Office and Insurance Departments; we have the Public Trust Department. Is it to be said that these departments are not directly under the control of the State? Do you mean to say the Insurance Department is not working well? There is an instance where you have direct parliamentary control in that case. We are now extending aid to settlers. We are greatly extending the functions of the State; and, while we have been extending it in one direction, we are, as it were, refusing to trust ourselves with regard to our railways. It is as necessary the State should have a control, if not the whole control, of the railways as that the State should have control of the other branches of the service I have mentioned. I say that the railways being under the control of irresponsible persons has promoted a monopoly, and that monopoly has proved injurious to the best interests of the colony. We are in no better position whatever than we were in when we had the control of our railways. And, Sir, the whole and sole reason that was given for the handing-over of this vast public estate to these three irresponsible persons was owing to the fact that there was on these benches a Government who had no confidence in themselves—a Government who wanted to divest themselves of their responsibility, and hand that responsibility over to the Railway Commissioners. If ever a fight took place in this House which I took a pleasure in, it was the fight we engaged in to prevent the railways from being handed over to three irresponsible persons; and if I bring them back to the people slowly, step by step, then I shall feel that I have done my duty to the people of New Zealand.

An Hon. MEMBER.—Why not do it at once?

Mr. SEDDON.—Well, there are some people who, with years and experience, know what they have done in youth—rash youth, Sir. There are men who, when they arrive at a ripe age, see the folly of what they have done.

I want to bring back our railways, and the surest way of bringing them back is to go step by step, and to make sure of our first point. But if you go as has just now been suggested—and I must say my feelings go in that direction—we might make a great mistake. It is not alone the wants of the people that have to be consulted. There is a danger in the way, as was stated by the senior member for Wellington City last session, and we must take what we can get. This is the position we take up; otherwise I would have brought in a Bill resuming the sole control of the railways at once. Some people have said that we are somewhat weak in regard to this Bill; but our weakness is our strength, because we shall get control, and even under this Bill the people of New Zealand will have a representative. He will be on the Board, and ultimately, I feel satisfied, it will prove beneficial. If I did not feel that, I should not propose the Bill as it stands. Sir, I have another return here compiled, showing the relative cost of the expenditure and the income, at the time the railways were handed over to Commissioners, to the condition of the railways at the present time. I believe it is better for me to defer reference to that until my reply. I have stated broadly the grounds on which I think we are justified in passing the Bill, and had better wait now for those who may dispute anything that I have said, or who can, in the working of our railways, prove to the House we were justified in giving over these railways to the Commissioners. Sir, it was an experiment. It was intended as an experiment, because in the Bill itself there was only an appointment for a given period, and the Act said that at that period the engagement must terminate. I say the period has been determined. The next question is as to whether we should renew it, and, in renewing, how far we should go. I think we are going by the Bill now before us as far as it is desirable we should go at present. Something has been said as to what took place at the elections in reference to the Government and the course which we took. I speak for myself, and, I believe, for my colleagues, when I say it would have been a most unwise policy for us to have adopted any other course. It would not be fitting or proper if the Government should, as it were, hand itself over to any employés of the State. There is no doubt there was discontent amongst our railway employés, but I felt the time might come when I might be on the Board with the Railway Commissioners, and, if myself or my colleagues had placed ourselves under obligations for political purposes to a branch of the railway service, that would have been a most improper thing to do, and would have placed any Minister in a position in which he would feel he had done wrong to himself, to the colony, and to the railway employés. Now, as regards the selection of the Commissioners, the Government were most careful in making the selection. As regards Mr. Ronayne, I told him that he would have charge of the Helensville Branch and the Hurunui Branch. He had been from one end

of the railway service to the other, and he was recognised as being a most efficient railway expert in the different branches of the service, and, Sir, he has proved that. With regard to the appointment of Mr. Scott, it was thought necessary to call in some one from outside having commercial knowledge, and an expert knowledge of the locomotive branch of the service. It was thought necessary we should have some one of that sort, and I have been satisfied that in making that appointment the Government did well. I have had no reason to regret the choice that was made. I feel that a better state of things now exists as regards the employés of the railways. The Commissioners have gone from one end of the colony to the other. They have met the commercial men of New Zealand; they have met the farmers of New Zealand; they have met those connected with the industries of New Zealand; and where they have gone on meeting the people, and conferring with them on railway matters, they have created a better feeling, and one of greater confidence, than that which hitherto existed. And they are more

8.30. in touch with the people of the country—the commercial industries and with the farmers—than hitherto. I have no hesitation in making that statement, and I say advisedly to the House that we should accept the position, and take upon ourselves that control. There ought to be a Minister who is well up in every detail of the working of our lines, and who will come into closer touch with the people of the colony, and will also be responsible to this House. I say that is what we want, and what we have a right to claim and demand—that there shall be responsibility. At the present time there is no knowledge on the part of a Minister, and no responsibility. Three-quarters of a million is voted every year by the House; there is £15,000,000 of capital invested in the construction of the railways; and this House and the people of the colony are not in that position that we have a right to demand. I would ask the House to carry the second reading of the Bill, and I will reserve to myself the right to reply to any questions that may be raised against what I have stated. I think, however, I have proved very clearly that we are justified in passing this Bill.

Captain RUSSELL.—I think the Premier has scarcely done himself justice on this occasion, and that he has not fully availed himself of it. There was, to my mind, a falling-off of his usual fire in the speech he has given us to-night, and, in fact, the Premier's speech was practically as weak and halting as the Bill he has brought before us. I cannot but notice the difference in the style of his speech this year when compared with the venomous philippic he delivered against the Commissioners last year. With regard to the passing of this Bill, last year he took the Bill to a certain point, and then he failed, at any rate, to convince me that there was any necessity to revert once more to political control. The principle underlying the whole question is a very simple one—that is, Does the country really wish to

revert once more to political control, or does it not? Again, is it likely that the railways would be better managed under political control, with all its demoralising effects, or under the present administration by an impartial body of men who are not under direct political control? I may say, however, that it is not a question of men at all; it is not a question of an individual Commissioner, but the principle that the Commissioners, whoever they are, shall be good and efficient men; and when the Minister comes to reply I would ask him to give us a little more information on this question than he has been inclined to give. I think he was wrong in some of the premises that he put to the House. He told us that £18,000 of revenue had been derived from the railway reserves, which should be territorial revenue, and not railway revenue. Well, most of those reserves were bought out of the earnings of the railways, or have been charged to them.

Mr. SEDDON.—No.

Captain RUSSELL.—The Premier says, "No"; but a very considerable portion of them was, and I question very much whether the Premier is not aware of that.

Mr. SEDDON.—Certainly not.

Captain RUSSELL.—I have always understood that a very considerable portion of these reserves have been bought out of railway revenue, and, that being so, the receipts have every right to be credited to railway revenue, and not to territorial revenue, because they were obtained by the earnings of the railways, and are not territorial revenue at all. Then the Minister went on to say that there was considerable clashing between the Commissioners and the Public Works Department. No wonder. The Minister, we all know, has himself opposed bitterly the administration under the Commissioners from the very moment of their coming into office. Under these circumstances the clashing has been inevitable, and there has been no attempt on the Minister's part to prevent that clashing. It takes two to make a fight, but the Minister for Public Works has always been ready to commence a fight on every imaginable occasion, and to perpetuate differences between himself and the Commissioners, when such differences were quite unnecessary. Then, again, we had the question of the general election referred to, and we were told that the people of this colony had expressed their desire for this change, and that they wished to revert to the political control. There is no subject which comes up before this House but the Premier brings up the result of the general election.

Mr. SEDDON.—I cannot help doing so every time I look over and see the sad condition of the opposite benches.

Captain RUSSELL.—Never mind; before long the Premier will see a very considerable accession of strength to this side of the House, I think, if he goes on lecturing certain individual members in the way that he is doing. There are many men who came up with a desire to support him, but who will shortly be found over on this side. Then, we were told

that this present arrangement was to continue for only a single year. What does that mean? It means that the principle of the Commissioners being the creatures of the Minister is to be thoroughly established, and that they will be always hanging on to the Minister's coat-tails, in the hope that they may be reappointed for another year. The whole principle of the independence of the Commissioners is to be disregarded and set aside, and they are to hold office only at the sweet will of the Minister of the day, in order that the railways may revert once more to political control.

Mr. SEDDON.—They are only appointed for nine months.

Captain RUSSELL.—I will come to that presently. The Minister told us that the subject of the safety of the travelling public and the spread of colonisation was involved in the question of railway management, and that therefore the Government ought to have a voice in it. Have there ever been many accidents? What has been the experience of railway control by Government? We have heard it said that Government administration was always successful; but if you want examples of rapid travelling, or general consideration for the public, would you go to Prussia, Southern Germany, Belgium, or any of the countries where the railways are managed by Government? No. You must go to the countries where the railways are managed by companies; and that shows, at any rate, that railway-fares and conveniences are more liberal in the countries where there is not Government administration; therefore the spread of colonisation and cheap fares will not be promoted by Government. Government will have no influence in this direction, and, if Ministers desire to make concessions to trade, a general system of low tariffs will not be brought about by Government control. The whole experience of railway-expert control over the whole world goes to show that the very reverse is the case.

Mr. SEDDON.—On the Continent they have the bureau system.

Captain RUSSELL.—Then, the Minister went on to say that the Commissioners were a failure in Victoria. I am quite sure I cannot contradict him on that point. He was right for once. And why were they a failure in Victoria? Because they were not given full powers. They were condemned to hang on to the coat-tails of the Minister, and were not given full powers, and the result was that their administration was a comparative failure. If we go to New South Wales, where they have a Chief Commissioner with real strength of character, and one who is allowed to really command, the result is different, and perfectly successful. Though, no doubt, there have been libels and charges brought against these Commissioners, and what man is there who does his duty who is not liable every day to this?—even the Premier himself tells us he is libelled every day—their failure in Victoria, and their success in New South Wales, both go to show that the Commissioners, when they have full powers, are likely to prove successful in the administration of the rail-

Captain Russell

ways. Then, he paid a compliment to the late Commissioners, and said that the experiment had been only a very slight failure; but I will endeavour to show to the House that the experiment was not a failure, but a complete success, and I will give facts and figures before I sit down to prove that their administration was successful. As to the question of dissatisfaction, there is no person who travels on the railways but who wants to travel at a cheap rate by the express train, and he wants that express train to stop at his own flag-station. He wants every imaginable concession, and if he does not get that concession he immediately growls. The comparison of the dissatisfaction often shown with the railway management with the satisfaction that there is with the management of the Postal Department, the Insurance Department, and the Public Trust Office is not in analogy. I will grant that all these three departments are admirably managed; but I maintain also that our railways have been admirably managed, and the only reason for dissatisfaction is that the travelling public are daily, hourly, and almost every minute, brought into contact with the officials of the Railway Department, and unless they get everything they want they are dissatisfied; while the administration of the Post Office, Insurance Department, and Public Trust Office is, comparatively speaking, mechanical as compared with the administration of the railways, and I think that there is no room for dissatisfaction, because, in addition, the public never come in contact with the management.

Mr. J. MCKENZIE.—What about the traction-engines and bullock-drays?

Captain RUSSELL.—As to that question, there is nothing at all in the assertion. It stands to reason that when persons are living twenty miles from a railway-station, and thirty or forty miles from a port, the conveyance of goods will be by traction-engines, bullock-drays, and all sorts of conveyances, instead of by the railway, because it is much cheaper to cart direct than to cart to the railway and pay the double charge upon the goods, especially as in most cases the carts have to return empty to the place from which they started. Then the Premier went on to say that we had petitions expressing dissatisfaction from farmers and others; but he must know that for every single petition presented to Parliament in connection with railway administration since the Railway Commissioners took office there were at least ten before they came into office. The very fact of the appointment of the Commissioners has reduced the number of petitions coming to this House to an almost insignificant number. As for the democracy managing our railways, it is perfectly true that I have every respect for the powers of the democracy; but there is no question, if the democracy administer our railways, all they can do is to elect an independent board of directors for that purpose. But, Sir, we are not a special board of directors for a particular purpose. Is there any member of the

House who can believe for one instant that if he were resident in England he would be selected as one of a board of directors for any railway in the United Kingdom? Undoubtedly not. If he were possessed of a title I have no doubt he might be able to get on a board of directors, but as plain business-men we should not be at all likely to be selected for appointment to a board of directors. I do not propose to say one word about the two gentlemen who have been recently appointed to the position of Commissioners, except this: that I can remember very distinctly the Premier stating, with regard to the Chief Commissioner (Mr. McKerrrow) some time ago, that as a surveyor he was a very good surveyor, but that as regarded the railways he knew nothing whatsoever about railways.

Mr. SEDDON.—That was when he was first appointed.

Captain RUSSELL.—Quite so. At any rate I remember his saying so. Now, the very same argument which he applied to Mr. McKerrrow as a Railway Commissioner would apply with equal force to these two gentlemen. Indeed, it will apply with greater force, for when Mr. McKerrrow was appointed he had two practised experts associated with him to guide him and keep him right, and all he had to do was to apply his common-sense to the administration of the railways; but now we have two gentlemen—one certainly not an expert, and the other scarcely so—appointed, who are associated with the Commissioner who the Premier said knew nothing at all about the management of railways when he was appointed: so, although clever men, they want the expert knowledge that is necessary in controlling the railways. It shows how very logical the Premier is. Possibly the railways are being managed very satisfactorily, notwithstanding. As to the salaries of £1,000 for the Railway Commissioners, I take it that £1,000 is quite sufficient, and for this reason: that the Minister is going to monopolize the whole power in his own hands. He is to have a deliberative vote and also a casting-vote, and under such a condition as that he will have the power, practically, of overruling these Commissioners whenever he chooses—he will virtually be the sole dictator as to the railways; and therefore I say it is quite sufficient to give the Commissioners £1,000 each, seeing that they are to have no responsibility at all. There is a clause in the Bill—clause 13—which I think is not quite what it ought to be. It is the clause fixing the salaries. Very great satisfaction has been given to the Postal Department by the system of classification that has been adopted there, and we have had a promise for a long while that a similar system of classification will be carried through the Civil Service. Had the department of the railways been reorganized in this way I venture to say it would have given satisfaction to the whole of the employés on the railways, and the colony would have removed from Ministers a patronage which I am sure ought not to be allowed, for it would prevent the Minister

being able to raise or reduce salaries as he chose. Instead of clause 13, there ought to be a proper system of classification introduced, and the railway employes would then know exactly in what position they would be. There is one other clause of the Bill which I object to most strongly—clause 20—which enables either of the Houses of Parliament to determine whether the railways shall revert to the control of the Crown, instead of remaining in the hands of the Commissioners. What reason there can be for departing from the ordinary system of government of the colony I cannot understand. Surely, so long as we have a representative system of government by the three branches of the Legislature, we ought to adhere to that system, and not to depart in a way like this from a custom of very many years' standing. I said that I would endeavour to show that the management of the railways under the Commissioners had been very good, and that the railways had progressed under their management. Sir, I have some figures which I believe to be absolutely incontrovertible; at any rate, they are taken from official sources. But before I come to them I would say that another reason why I disapprove entirely of the Public Works Minister—I am not alluding to the present one, of course—having control of the railways is this: that one of the principal essentials in the management of any business concern is continuity, and that is impossible under this Bill. When we place the power of management in the hands of the Public Works Minister we place it in the hands of a man who essentially knows nothing of the management of the railways, and in all probability he will be removed from office by the time he has acquired a little information on the subject. During the twenty-three years that the public-works policy has been in force we have had twenty-five readjustments of Ministers for Public Works; I do not say we have had twenty-five different Ministers, but twenty-five readjustments of the portfolio; and we have had persons of every class and condition in that position, not a single one of them being a railway expert, unless we may class Mr. Edward Richardson as one. We have had journalists, we have had farmers, we have had merchants, we have had bankers, we have had Civil servants, and now we have the Premier himself. I am prepared to admit that all these gentlemen were intelligent gentlemen, who devoted the whole of their energies to their departmental duties; but the nature of the businesses to which they had been trained could not have qualified them for managing the railways, and, taking the comparatively small time they were in office, it is impossible they could have gained the smallest knowledge of the railways. And yet we are asked to give this power to a Minister who is likely to be ejected from office before he can get a true knowledge of the management of the railways.

An Hon. MEMBER.—Oh!

Captain RUSSELL.—Oh, yes; it is so. I am afraid the honourable gentleman will not

Captain Russell

be got rid of quite as soon as he ought to be; but, even if he retains the management of the railways for three years, I do not believe that he himself imagines that at the end of that time he will know really much about the railways. If he does not, there is much risk of his acting improperly in the management of the railways, and for this reason: He told us that he had the estimates before him, that he had sanctioned increases of salaries, and that he had approved the estimates.

Mr. SEDDON.—Oh, no.

Captain RUSSELL.—Well, it was something like that,—because the power of the Commissioners will be taken into his own hands. Now, Sir, my time is getting on, and I must get to my figures. Well, figures are very common-sense things. I may be told, of course, that they may be made to prove anything. These figures, however, are from official sources, and they go to show that the management of the railways by the Commissioners has been eminently satisfactory. When the last three Commissioners took office the net receipts were £299,696 for their first year—1887—and the interest that the railways earned was £2 6s. for that year, and the working-expenses were 69·99 per cent. In the receipts for 1894—during which year they were for a time only in office, and then were supplanted by their successors—there was, unfortunately, a small decline, but the reason for that is not attributable to the present Commissioners or to the previous Commissioners. I believe it was entirely owing to circumstances which were unavoidable, such as a bad harvest, and so forth; but the fact remains there is a decrease, though the fact is not important. For the last year that the late Commissioners were in office here is the result of their work: The net earnings of the railways had risen from £299,696 to £449,380, and the interest they earned had risen from £2 6s. to £3 1s., while the working-expenses had diminished to 61·97 per cent., as against 69·99 per cent. Surely that goes to show that, so far as the financial results are concerned, there was a great success during the time those Commissioners were in office.

Mr. G. W. RUSSELL.—It was Mr. Maxwell's management all the time.

Captain RUSSELL.—It was Mr. Maxwell's management all the time; coupled with Mr. McKerrow's and Mr. Hannay's. So long as the control was in the hands of the Public Works Minister the results were unsatisfactory; but from the instant that the control was given into the hands of men who were independent, and who knew their business, the position improved, and, as I say, during their term of office the net receipts increased from £299,000 to £449,000.

Mr. SEDDON.—The honourable gentleman will see that it will be even better next year.

Captain RUSSELL.—I do not accept the honourable gentleman's word for that, because no doubt influences will be brought to bear by any Public Works Minister that ought not to be imported into the matter. Now, I may be

told that this increase of revenue was made at the expense of the travelling public. Such is not the case. A system of cheaper return-tickets was introduced; a reduction in railway-fares was carried out; there was a reduction of the tariff charges on every single item. I believe on every single item that is carried on the railways there was a reduction in the charges during the time of this increasing revenue, and the trains ran faster, and more frequently and numerous, than before; and there were more stations built.

Mr. J. MCKENZIE.—In your favoured district.

Captain RUSSELL.—In my district there is no favour shown, and I have never asked for any special favours. We have never asked for any favours, and precious few we have got. We practise a self-reliant policy there, and we get precious little thanks for doing it. Now we come to the employes. It is an absolute and incontrovertible fact that during the time of the late Commissioners the hours worked by the employes were reduced, and at the same time the salaries were rather increased than decreased. The great advantage in having independent Commissioners is that there is no system of political colour. The object of the Commissioners is to manage the railways so as to make them pay, and so as to retain their own credit in the colony. They have no political colour, and that is why I am averse from political control. So soon as you have that you will find that Ministers will revert to political colour, which would be a very great misfortune. As I have said, during the period that the late Commissioners held office the ordinary working-hours of the employes were reduced. In former days, when the railways were under political management, all the time that a train was standing at a station was not counted as time, and the persons who served on the engine were not allowed that time; but under the management of the Commissioners they were allowed to count that time—when the train was standing and was not in motion—when they arrived at the journey's end. The consequence is that they worked fewer hours than before and got more salary, the public travelled more quickly and more cheaply, and the colony derived a higher revenue than before. The Premier, as Minister for Public Works, in his speech, gave us no reason which I could understand, or, at any rate, appreciate, why the railways should be taken away from the proper system of control by the Commissioners, and why they should revert to a system involving political colour.

Mr. J. W. KELLY.—What class of salaries were raised?

Captain RUSSELL.—I have not got the figures now. They are all through every class. But I wish once more to urge on the House, in considering the matter, to endeavour to dissociate from the question the personality of the Commissioners, and recollect that the question is, whether the system of Commissioners or one of political control is the better. The Government with which I was connected has

been charged directly with not having got a Commissioner from Home. It is utterly impossible for the small amount that is allowed for the purpose to import an English Commissioner. If the House wants to get the services of a special expert from England it cannot get that Commissioner for a salary of £1,000, £1,500, or £2,000 a year. It must be prepared to grant him a salary of £3,000 or £4,000 a year. I believe there is no necessity for any such scheme. I believe that Commissioners of first-class ability can be got in the colony; and if the House trusts them implicitly, and will have no Ministerial control, I have no doubt the railways will be properly managed, and every convenience will be given to the travelling public, extensions of accommodation will be considered, and the revenue will go on steadily increasing.

9.0. Dr. NEWMAN.—The Premier, in moving the second reading of this Bill, said that the business of the colony was increasing, and that as the population increased the traffic on the railways increased; but I should like to draw his attention to the fact that according to the statistics the traffic on the lines is not increasing, but, on the contrary, there has been a remarkable decrease. It seems to me that under this Bill the honourable gentleman is taking from the Railway Commissioners all the power which they have had in the past, and I think, if this measure is given effect to, we shall not have independent Commissioners, but simply marionette Commissioners, under the control of the Ministry of the day. The Commissioners are to have no power to reduce rates, to increase salaries over a certain amount, to take land for railways, to take sidings for railways, *et cetera*. It seems to me that they are to have no power at all; they have simply to obey the behests of the Minister—to do what he wants. Their function appears to be to act as a buffer between the Minister and the people. Clause 4 provides that the Governor in Council, at any time when Parliament is not in session, may suspend any Commissioner from his office.

Mr. SEDDON.—That is on account of incompetency or for misbehaviour.

Dr. NEWMAN.—It does not impose such a limit.

Mr. SEDDON.—Look at subsection (2).

Dr. NEWMAN.—Anyhow, the Minister for Public Works can suspend a Commissioner, and, after the Minister suspends him, I should like to ask what chance he would have of being reinstated by this House. This Bill takes the whole power out of the hands of the Commissioners and places it in the Minister's own hands. If the Commissioners are not to have any power to carry out their wishes, or what they deem proper, what is the use of having them? I cannot understand why the Premier has not proposed at once to vest the railways in the Crown and make himself Minister of Railways. This measure, as I have said, simply provides for the appointment of three marionette Commissioners. I should like the Premier when he is replying to make a state-

ment as to this point. Probably next year, if this Bill is carried, we shall have a proposal from the honourable gentleman to do away with the Commissioners altogether, and put the control back in the hands of the Minister. Why therefore should we wait for another year, instead of doing that at once? The appointment of Commissioners was simply an experiment, and I think it is time now, after the nearly six years' experience we have had, that the railways should come back to the control of the Government. We have had continual friction during the past three years with the Railway Commissioners, and we shall still have friction under this new proposal, the only difference being that the Minister has set up three Commissioners as buffers between himself and the public. The Premier talks of the necessity of running the railways in the interest of settlement and of our various industries. The honourable member for Waimea-Sounds says that we must have the railways run at lower rates, in the interest of settlement; yet his railway does not pay working expenses. I would remark, however, that if this is going to be done in that district he might move to provide at once that all the goods in his part of the country should be carried free. As regards the question of freights, I do not think it is right that people should be able to go to the Minister and ask for reductions of the freight on particular articles. I think that such reductions should only be made once a year, and then that the freights should be adopted by this House. We have one national debt, we have one system of railways, and one Customs tariff, and I think we should also have one railway tariff for all New Zealand. Why should any set of sturdy beggars be able to go to the Minister and get a reduction of freight whilst others who are not sturdy beggars cannot get similar reductions? The thing is an outrage. I think that all rates should be the same throughout the colony. Why should we in the North Island pay much more heavily for railway carriage than they do in the South? You have only to look at the North Island charges, and compare that list with the South Island charges, to see that in this respect we are heavily handicapped. I think, when the Premier replies, he should give us some idea as to whether the railways are going to be any differently managed in the future. The Railway Commissioners this year have given us certain estimates, and it seems to me they are likely to turn out wrong, for they are now £26,000 behind on the first three and a half months of this year. If that continues, I think there is very little chance of the returns recovering, and, notwithstanding the exhilarating Budget of the Treasurer, if that continues there will be a considerable loss at the end of the year. I would point out to the Premier that since the three new Railway Commissioners have taken office the railway expenditure has increased from 61 per cent. on revenue to nearly 67 per cent. That is a very large item.

Mr. SEDDON.—They cannot help that when the traffic falls off.

Dr. Newman

Dr. NEWMAN.—The honourable gentleman was kind enough to tell us that the business is increasing. I noticed that statement, but I cannot see how it can be reconciled with the facts, for it seems clear that there has been a falling-off in business, whilst the expenditure has increased. We have also seventy-seven miles more of railways, and yet the revenue, as I have said, has fallen off. Even the Premier's pet line—the Greymouth-Hokitika Railway—which has been vigorously pushed on, hardly pays its way. As a matter of fact, many of these smaller lines ought not to have been made. It has been said that they are feeders, but I have also heard it remarked that those lines ought not to be called railway-feeders but bleeders, and I believe that is a very good title for them.

Mr. GUINNESS.—What would you call the North Island Main Trunk line?

Dr. NEWMAN.—That is paying exceedingly well at this end. At the other end it is not open for a considerable distance. When this central line is opened throughout, it will be one of the most handsomely-paying lines in the colony. It will be a marked contrast to the railway running from Brunerton across to Springfield. I am sure the honourable gentleman opposite will agree with me that the North Island Trunk line will open up an enormous tract of valuable country, and not merely rocks and glaciers, which the Premier talked of to-night. How can the honourable member for the Grey compare these two railways? Why, there is nothing comparable between them. When the North Island Main Trunk line is properly developed it will be an exceedingly well-paying line.

Mr. SEDDON.—It may be good at both ends, but the centre is scoria country.

Dr. NEWMAN.—The Premier has not been up there.

Mr. SEDDON.—Yes.

Dr. NEWMAN.—Well, the only thing that I learned as to the honourable gentleman's visit when I called at the accommodation-houses in that district was that the honourable gentleman said, "Really this house ought to be licensed." The owners are ready to follow the honourable gentleman through good and evil, and are almost ready to worship him. As a matter of fact, this is all that I could find out in connection with the trip of the Premier to that district. As to the proposal in this Bill, I would say, let us go the whole distance; and I intend to test the feeling of the House upon the subject. The honourable gentleman proposes that, by resolution of either House, the railways can be reverted in the hands of the Ministers. It seems to me that is an extraordinary provision, seeing that the honourable gentleman is constantly declaiming against the other Chamber; yet under this measure that Chamber may, by a simple resolution, after this Bill is passed, place the railways in the hands of the Government.

Mr. SEDDON.—No, next session.

Dr. NEWMAN.—Well, either House can, by resolution next session, hand back the control of the railways to the Government. I

intend to test the feeling of the House on the point I have mentioned, and, if the Premier will allow his followers to vote on this Bill according to their consciences, I am sure that the great majority will support my resolution. I beg to move, That all the words after "That this Bill" be struck out, with the view of inserting the following words: "be referred back to Ministers, so to alter it as to make the railways revert in the Queen."

Sir R. STOUT.—I feel bound to second the amendment, because I have always been opposed to the railways being managed by Commissioners. I think it was wrong. I thought it was wrong at the time, and I think it is wrong now. I believe we can have no proper management of our railways unless they are placed directly under Ministerial control, and Ministerial control is placed under parliamentary control; and I do not understand why the Government have not brought down a Bill on those lines. Last session I stated that I believed that was the proper course to adopt; but, seeing that it was immediately before the election, I was willing to support any modification of that proposal in order to bring this question more into line, so that we might get direct Ministerial control. But now, after a new Parliament has been elected, I do not see why this House should not pass a Bill re-vesting the control directly in the Government.

Mr. SEDDON.—You can do it in Committee on this Bill.

Sir R. STOUT.—If we want that, we do not want this long Bill—we do not want to spend our time in discussing all sorts of provisions. All we need is one or two clauses. We need not waste our time in discussing a Bill of fifty-one clauses, which are entirely unnecessary. But what I object to in this Bill is that it has no leading idea or guiding principle. It is not a Bill to provide that the railways shall be managed under Ministerial responsibility, nor is it a Bill giving the management of railways to Commissioners. It is neither one thing nor the other. There is no policy in the Bill. I agreed with most of what the Premier said in speaking about the principle which should guide us in dealing with the railways, for the whole of his argument was against having the Commissioners' control at all. In that respect I thoroughly agree with him. I also agree with him that it has not been a success in any country where it has been tried. The reason is this: You cannot dissociate railway management from parliamentary interference. When you have this happening with Commissioners you have a sort of control which is not at all satisfactory. I have a word or two to say about why we should have general control, before I deal with some other things. First, I say that, if we say that Ministers cannot manage the railways, then they are unfit to manage the various other things cast upon them as a Government. There are no functions in reference to the management of the railways that they cannot well perform. Not only so, but there are strong

reasons why they should have the management of the railways, because they are not merely roads for the purpose of gaining revenue for the people, but they must be used for industrial purposes, and we have to frame our rates and provide for the number of trains to be run, in order that the country can be developed. Certainly, looking to our financial state, I do not think that at this time we can afford to lose much revenue; but still there ought to be what might be termed two principles guiding us in dealing with our railways: one is to get as much revenue as will not make our taxation in other ways oppressive to the people; but the other principle is to utilise the railways so as to develop the productive powers of the colony. I do not think these two important principles in dealing with taxation and the development of our industries should rest upon three irresponsible Commissioners. It ought to be in the hands of Ministers, under the control of Parliament. And I cannot see why, if Ministers are fit to deal with the various other things they have to deal with, they cannot deal with railways. Then, our governmental functions are yearly increasing; the policy of the Government is to greatly increase the functions of Government, even this session; and I do not see, therefore, why the management of fourteen millions' worth of property should be taken out of the hands of the Ministers and of Parliament. There were some criticisms that I do not agree with. For example, it was said that the late Commissioners had bought land that is bringing in a rental of £10,000 or £12,000 a year. I think in this the Minister has rather overstated the case. He forgets that the land he says is bringing in that amount was not all purchased by the late Commissioners. Most of it was bought before they took office. The Commissioners took very little land compared with what was taken before.

Mr. SEDDON.—They have taken large areas.

Sir R. STOUT.—I do not think the land they have taken is giving a quarter of the revenue that was given by the rentals the honourable gentleman has mentioned. This is a fair test, because I know something about it myself. Another thing I wish to say is this: As to the past Commissioners, I have always defended Mr. Maxwell; when he was first appointed I defended him, and I believe he is the ablest railway expert we have had in the colony, and I still think so. I know, perhaps, his manner was not always the best with those who did not know him, but that is the outside of the man, and I believe we could not have got an able expert or a more upright and honest man to manage the railways than Mr. Maxwell. And as to Mr. Hannay, who has been dismissed, I have this to say: that he is a very able man, and there is no Railway Commissioner now equal to him in traffic management; and I think it was entirely wrong for these two gentlemen to have been removed. They ought to have been retained, and we have supplanted them by two men who are not their equals in any respect.

Mr. GUINNESS.—Question.

Sir R. STOUT.—The honourable gentleman who says "Question" knows nothing about railway management.

Mr. GUINNESS.—I know as much as the honourable gentleman.

Sir R. STOUT.—That would not be perhaps a very great deal. The honourable gentleman had better pay attention to his flowers. So far as Mr. Scott is concerned, I believe him to be an able, practical business-man. I am not making any charge against him, but he has had no experience whatever in railway management. The only thing he has had to do with railways was that his firm had a contract for the construction of a few locomotives for the Government of which I was a member.

Mr. R. McKENZIE.—Railway-construction, too.

Sir R. STOUT.—Well, I believe he did put up a bridge on the West Coast.

An Hon. MEMBER.—And one in Canterbury.

Sir R. STOUT.—I believe the honourable gentleman has also put up some bridges; but would any one suggest that he should be a Commissioner? With reference to Mr. Ronayne, I believe that in the various appointments he has held, so far as I have heard—I do not know that I should know him if I met him in the street—he has performed his duties very effectively. I am not saying a word against him; but there is no comparison between his experience and that of any others in the service. He was selected not because he was a first-class man in the service at all; nor has it been suggested that Mr. Scott was selected because he was the best man that could be picked out in the colony for the office; the reason why he was selected no doubt the honourable gentleman will be able to state in his reply. There is one thing in the Bill I am extremely pleased to see—namely, that it makes provision for a Board of Appeal for the employes if they are dissatisfied with their treatment. I think this is a thing in the Bill that deserves great praise, because the railways must always be a monopoly. New Zealand is not like England, where there are various companies. Here practically the whole of the railways, except a small piece here—the Wellington-Manawatu line—are under the control of Government, and if a man who is a railway expert once loses his position he is, practically, compelled to leave the colony; and I think, therefore, it is only fair there should be a right of appeal, so that every discharged employe can see that he has justice done. And I hope, though the railways may go back to the Government, this principle will still be maintained.

An Hon. MEMBER.—The Board is only a buffer.

Sir R. STOUT.—At any rate, the men have a chance of being heard, which I am afraid they have not had in the past. Now I wish to say a word or two as to the management under the present Commissioners, and from what I have heard it is entirely unsatisfactory. Let us see what is the position. I do not object to trade-unions; I have always been in their favour;

and I regret to see the present Commissioners have prevented the Railway Union from being allied with other unions. The Commissioners have not any right to interfere; and I think the railway men, if they have formed a union, have a right to associate themselves with any other union they please, and there is no right with the railway management to interfere with their amalgamation. But what I do say is this: From what I have heard, the union has had more to say in the management of the railways than the Commissioners or anybody else. I will give an illustration that I consider demands inquiry. I think it is better not to mention names in the House, but there was a man we will call "A," a Locomotive Foreman, who had been in the service for ten or twelve years in one of the centres—I will not mention which, so as not to identify the man.

Mr. SEDDON.—We know him.

Sir R. STOUT.—Then the honourable gentleman knows him to be a most respectable man. He had been in the service for ten or twelve years, and had performed his work well; he was well liked by the employes under him, and was well liked by the officials over him; no charge had been made against him, and, without any reason, he was told he was to be reduced in the service. No reason whatever was given why he was to be reduced. The only thing he could think of was this: that on the occasion of a strike some twelve or thirteen years previously he had taken part in the strike,—against the strike in some respects,—and he stood by the then railway management against some of his fellow-employes, and he was now punished by being reduced, and had practically to leave the service. I consider this is a most disgraceful thing.

Mr. CARNELL.—It is not true.

Sir R. STOUT.—The honourable member for Napier should not say it is not true. He knows nothing about it, and uses a parrot-cry, without knowing anything about the matter.

An Hon. MEMBER.—Has it taken thirteen years to find it out?

Sir R. STOUT.—No reason was given for his being reduced and having to leave the service. He had been well trained at Home, on the Midland and other railway-lines in England, and there was no reason why he was reduced at all but that he was not in harmony with some portions of the trades-unions in Christchurch, and this was his punishment. He was one of the men in the list to which I have previously referred, as one who was to be punished. I heard of this list more than a month before the list was being put into operation, and the names were given me. And not only so, but all those whose names were on the list as to be dismissed have been reduced by the Commissioners; and I am informed—and this I think is a thing the Government should inquire into—let them call the Commissioners before them—one Commissioner actually proposed that the men on that list should be dismissed. At all events, their salaries were reduced. Decreases have been made of from £100 to £150 a year in the salaries of these

officers. It is well known that these officers are distasteful to some of the unions because of the attitude they took up in the railway strike, and all these men have been punished. This is not fair, and it is not just; and it makes me more than ever insist that the railways should not be managed by irresponsible officers dictated to by a few officers of a trades-union, but should be placed under Ministerial responsibility and parliamentary control. It may be said that this was done for the sake of economy. How, then, does it happen that I had the list given to me more than a month before the salaries were reduced—a month before these men were to be driven out of the service by having their salaries reduced, or dismissed from their employment altogether? I will give another case. I had a list of certain men who were to be promoted: some of them have not got promotion. So far as I know, only one has got promotion. And why? Because the men that were to be dismissed to allow these men to be promoted only had their salaries reduced; they did not leave the service, and consequently the promotion became impossible. But one man was promoted to the position of Locomotive Foreman. He was promoted over the heads of his seniors in the service. I am not saying the man was incompetent—so far as I have heard he was competent, and I make no charge against his ability; but he was put over the heads of his seniors, and I will put it in this way—perhaps his superiors. He was not recommended for promotion by the head of the department. Others had to make way for him. That man was put on the list of names that I have got of those who were to be promoted. That bargain has been fulfilled, and he has been promoted, as I again repeat, not on the recommendation of the head of the department. Is not this entirely destroying all the discipline of a department when such a thing as that is allowed to happen? And he did not commence with the same pay as other newly-appointed Locomotive Foremen, at a certain salary. He was promoted to the pay given to Locomotive Foremen who have been in the service many years. He was given that salary straight away. What has this man done that he should get such rapid promotion, and be placed over the heads of others? He has done this: At the last strike he was one of the main men of the strike. He was against the Railway Commissioners, and, in consideration of that, although they took him back again into the service, his reward under the new Commissioners was given for having gone against his superior officers. Is that right—is that proper? That is what has happened, and it cannot be denied. I have got the names and I have got all the circumstances, and I say he was one on the list of those who were to receive promotion. Now, I may also tell the House this: that one of the Commissioners proposed that the recommendations on the list should be carried out, and that these men should be dismissed from the service. But I am informed that the Chief Commissioner, having the power of veto, objected to the dis-

missal. He apparently,—weakly, as I think,—however, agreed to the reduction of the salaries of these men. Perhaps it was thought that if their salaries were reduced the men would leave the service, and the promised scheme of promotion could be carried out. I am also informed that the discipline of the service has not been maintained as it used to be when the Commissioners had the dealings with their employés; and, instead of the Commissioners dealing with their employés, as in all well-regulated services they ought to be dealt with, inquiries are frequently made by the heads of the department and information is obtained in that way: one or more of the Commissioners has been in the habit of seeing junior employés privately, simply to get information from them. Furthermore, one of the clerks has been appointed to look up past records extending over several years, to see what black marks have been put against the names of employés in the service, so that they may be recorded and kept in view for future use. I say that is an entirely unfair thing to be done to any employé. If a man has committed any wrong in the past you have no right to drag it up against him now.

Mr. MORRISON.—Has this been done under the present Commissioners?

Sir R. STOUT.—Yes, by the present Commissioners. That is entirely unfair. I am willing to support whoever has the management of the railways, but I think we should get a Board of Appeal. I have never been against trades-unions. I would give them absolute freedom and every right to unite and carry out their objects. But I do object to five or six of the head officers of any trades-union practically bossing the service. I say that would be a gross injury to some men. Some of them might become marked men. If such power is given to officers of these unions they might be able to drive a man out of the service and ruin him for life, because this man who would be driven out of the service would not have been able to save sufficient means to maintain him for the rest of his days. And what is he to do? It means that he has either to leave this colony or, practically, starve. I object entirely to that kind of management being carried on in connection with our railways. As I said before, some time ago, that I would take the opportunity of making these charges when the Railway Bill was under discussion, I have made them now. As to certain facts, I know that they are correct. Other things I have only given on the information supplied to me. It has been supplied to me, however, in such a way that I have no doubt whatever it is true, and I submit that it ought to be inquired into by the Railways Committee. There are two more things in connection with our railway service that require amendment, and which have not been dealt with in this Bill. One of them has been touched on by the honourable member for Hawke's Bay. I say we ought to have some system of appointment of the officers to our railway service. I object to allow any Government service to be manned

simply by those who may be in power perhaps having regard to political colour. That is, I think, entirely unfair. What I think should be done is what I suggested in 1886, in connection with our Civil Service, which is this: There are always a certain number of cadets required in the Service—of course occasional hands are also needed, as you must take them on as the business needs; but they will only be what might be termed occasional employes and others. But you ought to have two branches in your Service—namely, what may be termed the clerical branch of the Service and the technical branch; and I say that, in those, appointments ought to be made irrespective of political colour altogether. So far as the clerical branch is concerned, the appointments ought to be based on competitive examinations. In connection with the technical branch, you could not perhaps make the appointments by competitive examinations. Then, I think we ought to give to the representatives of electoral districts the right, in turn, to nominate an applicant for employment, just as is done in connection with the Naval Department in the United States. That would place all the electoral districts on a level, and they would have equal recognition in their turn. I consider it perfectly criminal to punish a man for his political opinions. It is just as bad as to punish a man for his religious beliefs. I think it is entirely unfair that any Government department should have its officers promoted because of their political opinions. We know that the whirligig of time brings round its revenges, and the political pendulum swings one way and then another; and I ask, is it right, in a Government service, that our employes should be appointed because of the political opinions they may profess? As I have said, I agree with the amendment of the honourable member for Wellington Suburbs. I agree with it because I ask this House to affirm the general principle, and the whole speech of the Premier was in favour of this amendment. He says we should have the railways controlled by Government, and so on. The only difference between us is this: The Premier wishes to proceed slowly. But there is nothing in this Bill providing for proceeding slowly. The only point in it in reference to the taking of the control by the State is in section 20 of the Bill, which provides that either House may resolve to re-vest the railways in the Government. What does this mean? Is it to be acted upon? If it is to be acted upon, then as soon as this Bill passes the House may meet to pass a resolution to do it.

Mr. SEDDON.—You have not read the clause.

Sir R. STOUT.—I have read it, and this is what the clause says: "In case either House of the General Assembly shall, at any session thereof to be held after the session wherein this Act is passed, pass a resolution that the railways in the colony, now vested in the Commissioners, should again be vested in Her Majesty," and so on. Very well; what does that mean? Next session, were the Government to have a resolution passed in favour of the railways vest-

Sir R. Stout

ing in the Government, what would happen? Are the Commissioners to be appointed for a term? If the Commissioners are to be appointed for, say, five years, then we shall have to pay them £1,000 a year for these five years; and why should we waste the money in that way?

Mr. SEDDON.—That is provided against in the Bill.

Sir R. STOUT.—The honourable gentleman will pardon me. If he will read subsection (2) of section 20 he will see this:—

"The appointments of the Commissioners shall be determined, but they severally shall receive appointments from the Governor as officers of the railway service of the colony, to date from the aforesaid day, for the residue of the terms of office for which they were respectively appointed as Commissioners aforesaid, and at the same rate of salary."

So that I am quite correct. The result of that will be that you are going to appoint three Commissioners for five years at £1,000 a year; and why should we waste the public money in that way? The Commissioners would never work well in the service if you put them practically in the position of junior employes under the Ministers.

Mr. SEDDON.—The term is not five years.

Sir R. STOUT.—Well, it may be three years, I admit; but I am speaking from the section in the original Act, which is five years.

Mr. SEDDON.—That is repealed.

Sir R. STOUT.—Section 7 says this: "Every Commissioner shall hold his office during good behaviour for the term during which he may be appointed." Well, what does the honourable member mean when he says they are not to be appointed for five years? What section provides against that?

Mr. SEDDON.—The section you have just quoted.

Sir R. STOUT.—Pardon me, there is no section in this Bill providing for that at all, and, even if there were, it would make a farce of the whole affair. It would not appoint the Commissioners at all except for twelve months. It would simply place them under the heel of the Ministers. If we wish to have the Commissioners continued at all, then we ought to put them in an entirely independent position, and not have this mongrel control. If we are not to have the Commissioners—and I hope the House will resolve not to continue the Commissioners, as I do not think we ought to have them—then let us have the courage of our opinions, and repeal all the sections of the Act which have been passed retaining the Commissioners. That is, I think, the proper thing to do. I hope the House, the members of which are fresh from the country, and the majority of whom are, I believe, in favour of doing away with the control of the railways by the Commissioners, will pass the Bill in that shape. We have this session passed Bill after Bill on the ground that the people have given their voice at the elections, and I ask this House if the people have expressed their views in favour of the present Bill. I have heard

and read a great number of speeches during the last election, but I have never heard a suggestion in the direction of the amendments contained in this Bill made on any political platform whatever.

Mr. R. MCKENZIE.—We have listened, Sir, to a somewhat able speech on railway management from the senior member for Wellington City, and we must admit that he shows considerable knowledge of railway affairs. There is one thing I entirely agree with him upon, and that is that there should be a Board of Appeal between the Railway Commissioners and the railway servants, if we are going to continue the Commissioners. I believe I know something about railway management, and I know that railway management by Commissioners has been a failure in all the Australian Colonies where it has been tried. I quite agree that we should entirely do away with the Railway Commissioners, and have nothing more to do with them. So far I go with the honourable gentleman; but when he expresses opinions about the gentlemen who are at present managing our railways I disagree with him altogether. One or two of those gentlemen I have known for some years, and I know them to be able and capable men in their business—quite as capable, I feel certain, as any of the gentlemen who were in that position before. If they are to continue in the railway management I have no doubt they will give the public of this colony quite as much satisfaction as the gentlemen who managed the railways before them. Our railways are the most important asset we have in the colony: in fact, they are fully as important as the banking institutions of the colony over which so much hurried legislation is taking place at present. I think we have invested something like sixteen millions of money in our railways, and I consider that we should see that they are well and ably managed. The management of the railways by Commissioners in the colony has been a failure, and the sooner we give it up the better. I believe there are gentlemen in this House who are quite as capable of managing the railways as any other gentlemen in the colony, and they at least would be responsible to the people, which is more than any one can say with regard to the past or present Commissioners. I know the Commissioners are all able men, but we have no more control over them than we have over the Czar of Russia. They are practically irresponsible. They can do whatever they like, without any regard for the wishes or the will of the people. I maintain that that is a very bad position for the people of this colony to allow their railways to be placed in. We hear a great deal said about our railways being run on cheap lines. Well, I know something about railways, and I say that the railways are run too cheaply already. Our railways should be managed and maintained more on commercial principles than they are at present. I think the taxpayers of the colony pay something like £200,000 a year now to make up the deficiency in the interest upon the cost of the railways. That is a position which should not

obtain. I say that the isolated portions of the colony, where there are no railways, have a wrong done to them by that. It is unjust to them, and that injustice should not be allowed. The public which has the convenience of the railways should pay for that convenience, and thus we should deal more fairly with people in isolated portions of the colony; and the people who visit the colony should not, I say, be allowed to travel at the expense of the general taxpayer of the colony. I trust that if the railways are to be managed by the Government they will be managed more on commercial principles. I am not going into the question very deeply to-night, but I wish to refer to some of the remarks that have been made by the honourable member for Hawke's Bay, the leader of the Opposition. He stated that the railway management by Commissioners in Victoria was found to be a failure. I am well aware that the railway management there was a failure. Then, the honourable gentleman told us that in New South Wales the railway management by Commissioners had been a splendid success. I know as a matter of fact that the railway management by Commissioners in New South Wales was a greater failure than it was in Victoria, or even in this colony. Three or four years ago, when the Government of New South Wales was prepared to abolish the Railway Commissioners, there was a case brought against a Railway Commissioner by a member of Parliament, who made most serious and infamous accusations against the Chief Commissioner. This case was tried in the Supreme Court, and the Commissioner was found to be an honest man. I was present in the Centennial Hall, Sydney, when there was an immense gathering, probably the largest there has been in any building in that colony, gathered together to do honour to him; but it was not because he was successful as a railway expert, but because he came out of that trial without blemish. No one at that great meeting attempted to advocate or support railway management by Commissioners. Mr. Eddy is at present Railway Commissioner there. I am satisfied that the railway management in New South Wales has proved a failure, and that long ago it was proved a failure, as it is now, and always will be. The public of New South Wales are much more dissatisfied with railway management by Commissioners than are the people of this colony. I have no objection, if the Government think fit, to the railway management being continued as it is at present for a year or two, with a member of the Government sitting on the Board. At the same time I think this House and the Government will make a serious mistake if they continue the present management any further. This House and the Government should take the control of the railways. They may continue the present Commissioners, if they like, as managers, but should certainly abolish the present control by the Commissioners. We have now no control of the railways. Even the Government have none, and, if I ask the simplest question, neither the Premier of the

colony nor any other gentleman on the Government benches can say or do anything without the sanction of the Commissioners. That is a position that never should obtain in any country governed by a democracy, by a Liberal Government, or even by a Conservative one. I say it is a wrong thing, when the taxpayers have paid something like £16,000,000, that their representatives cannot control the railways in the least degree. I fully concur in a great deal that has been said by the senior member for Wellington City, but I do not recognise that he is at all an able expert in railway management. He said a great deal that he did not understand. He understands how to draft a Bill in the early hours of the morning, but I must demur to his posing as a railway expert.

Mr. EARNSHAW.—I am sorry that to all appearance there is no desire to discuss what the Premier said was one of the most important measures brought before the House this session. But before I deal with the measure I should like to refer to some remarks the honourable member for Wellington City (Sir R. Stout) has just made, and I do so because I have had a close connection with the Railway Union for the last four years, and, as that connection is now at an end, I am speaking quite free from any prejudice, or any desire to make things appear different from what they are. I am aware of some of the names he has referred to, but at the same time I desire to say that, as the late president of the Otago branch of the Railway Servants' Union, I know absolutely nothing of the statements he has made; and I am convinced that the secretary and the officers in connection with that branch know nothing with regard to the statement that has been made to the House. What has occurred or what may have occurred in other centres I am not going to make any remark upon; I only say that I know nothing whatever about it, and I do not believe that it is known of in Otago. I think, at the same time, that there may be some truth in some of the information the honourable gentleman has been furnished with. I was in a position to trace, at any rate, one case that he referred to, because of my connection some twelve years ago with the railway service, in which I took a very prominent part in Christchurch at the time of the strike. I will only say with regard to that that the person referred to was dismissed from the Amalgamated Society of Engineers in England for the action that he took during that period. He was judged before a most competent tribunal—and certainly not a biased tribunal—and he was turned out of the society. I am not going to make any comment at all upon what has occurred from that day to this, nor to further refer to any cases that have been brought forward; but I desire to say, unmistakably, that, so far as the largest branch of that Railway Servants' Society is concerned—namely, the Otago branch—they know absolutely nothing of the cases referred to. Sir, I regret, as I regretted the last time when a similar measure to this was before us, that

Mr. R. McKenzie

the Premier did not do that justice to the measure which I think he is fully competent to do; and it is very curious that the same circumstance that caused him not to do justice to the subject last time has had a similar effect to-night. Curiously enough, the morning before the Railway Bill was brought down last year we adjourned at twenty-five minutes to six o'clock, and this morning we adjourned at a quarter to seven. I have no doubt that the strain upon my honourable friend has been of such a character that he has not been able to do justice to the measure, and he has failed to do justice to it in this respect: that he has not at all dealt with the underlying principles involved as to the question of bureaucratic control as against Responsible Government. That, I think, he ought to have dealt with, in the position he occupies. But he has dealt more with detail circumstances, which I think would have been better left to some of his colleagues or supporters. Now, in the course of his remarks the Premier said there were three distinct branches in the service—the locomotive, the traffic, and the policy. Well, I should like to know which of the three Commissioners appointed has been appointed to deal with the policy. If it be Mr. McKerrow, one of the main arguments that has always been urged against Mr. McKerrow was that, while in his former capacity in the Survey Department he was a most capable man, and most highly esteemed, yet he knew absolutely nothing up to the time of his appointment with regard to railway management. The argument that had been used by the Liberal party throughout the five years had been that he still had not the capacity to deal with our railways from a commercial and policy point of view. I say that has been maintained by all the leaders of the Liberal party on the platforms when they have dealt with the question. All the Liberals, when addressing their constituents, in referring to the *personnel* of the Commissioners, expressed an opinion that Mr. McKerrow was a very able surveyor, but was not competent to deal with the policy governing our railways. Now, if we wanted men to deal with the locomotive department and with the traffic, then I say, undoubtedly—strongly as I have been opposed to the late Commissioners—that we have not made any advance by the exchange, and I say that Mr. Maxwell and Mr. Hannay are far superior in every possible aspect to Mr. Scott and Mr. Ronayne. That may be a matter of opinion, but it is my opinion; and it is also my opinion that these appointments have been political appointments rather than appointments because of the qualifications of those gentlemen to fill the positions they have been put into. I say that, in regard to two—and possibly it may apply with regard to the whole—of the present Railway Commissioners, they have been political appointments, and have not been made with regard to fitness. Now, if the question of policy is to be one of the three features, I want to know why we are going to have three Commissioners, because it must not be forgotten we are going to have the

Minister a political power on the Board, and, that being so, only two should be required, one for the locomotive and one for the commerce and traffic department; therefore I do not see any reason for three Commissioners. I have always been opposed to Commissioners, and shall have much pleasure in supporting the amendment of the honourable member for the Hutt. I regret exceedingly that the Premier did not take the bold Roman course and come down to this House and propose that the railways should revert in the Crown. I am quite sure that the Liberal party throughout the country would have supported him if he had taken that course, and I think that they look to him to take that course. Now, with

10.0. regard to the question of having Commissioners, I see no reason why we should not revert to the position which was crucial at the time the former Bill was carried through the House. The country really desired that there should be some true railway expert imported from the Old Country or from America, practically to take the head of this department. That was what was looked for, and that was what I believe, by reading the debates at that time, the House really believed would be done—that the Atkinson Administration would, in the carrying-out of that Bill, bring out from England some real railway expert, who could take a new departure with regard to the whole policy and management of our railways. That, Sir, was not done, and the present Government appear to me to be following in the very same footsteps as the late Government have taken. All they have done is simply to change the men. Now, I have no doubt—in fact, I am certain—that, if the same crisis arose under the administration of the present Commissioners that arose under the old Commissioners at the time of the strike, the same results would follow as between the Commissioners and the men. There is no doubt that the same position the old Commissioners took up towards the men would be taken by the present Commissioners—exactly the same course. I do not believe that Mr. Scott would deal in any different way with the railway employes now from the way they were dealt with by Mr. Maxwell, if the same occasion arose. At any rate, I would sooner trust myself under Mr. Maxwell than I would under Mr. Scott if I were working on the railways.

An Hon. MEMBER.—How do you know?

Mr. EARNSHAW.—I have worked under Mr. Maxwell, and the honourable gentleman has not. Now, there is one point that has come out very clearly, and that is with regard to the term for which the Commissioners are to be appointed. Under this Bill that term is practically left blank. Now, I think, if we are going to appoint new Commissioners—which I trust this House will, by carrying the amendment, refuse to do—we cannot appoint them for a less term than five years.

An Hon. MEMBER.—They can be appointed for a year.

Mr. EARNSHAW.—Of course we can ap-

point them for a year, and then we make them the mere creatures of the Minister of Railways for the time being. If we appoint them for a term of one or two years, then we make these three Commissioners the mere tools and creatures of the Minister of Railways for the time being, whoever that person may be; and I think, if the House determines it will have Commissioners, it should place them out of the personal control of any Minister of the day, but subject to this House. We should give them a tenure of office quite equal to the term of two Parliaments, so that their conduct, whether good or bad, would not only be reviewed by the Minister, but by the constituencies of the country also. I am not going to debate this Bill at length, because I dealt fully with this question during last Parliament. The whole point at issue turns on this: whether the Liberal party are going to support bureaucratic control. There is no country in which that system has been tried but it has been a failure; and what is more it is absolutely out of consonance with the democratic principle—that is, responsible government. Let us look at England, with regard to a department which certainly is far greater and more far-reaching in its character than are all the departments of New Zealand put together, or are ever likely to be, and that is the Department of War. If it has been found—and it has been found—that the purest administration is that of England—there we find that every department is directly under the control of a Minister—then we have no reason to fear that the management of our railways by the Government must result in maladministration. I fail to see, myself, where the magnitude or the extraordinary work required of a Minister of Railways would come in with regard to controlling our railways. Under the old régime of Ministerial control we did not find that the Minister broke down under it any more than we find that Ministers in other departments break down. He would be guided, as Ministers are guided in every other department, by the advice tendered to him by the head of that department; and if we get an expert who is competent to deal with the general administration of our railways, we can have subordinate to him—not equal to him at all—a technical expert with regard to local construction and management of our railways. If that is done I see no reason why we cannot revert to the old phase of the question, and I think it would be much better to do so. Under this Bill it will mean this: that the Minister of the day will have the full patronage of the railways. He will be able to do as he chooses in that respect, and yet he will be able to use the Commissioners as a buffer between himself and the public. Now, we should either have it entirely non-political—we should put men in the same position as they were in under the old Bill, and give them absolute control of the railways—or else say that our railway government shall be absolutely political. And I am convinced of this: that, with our triennial Parliaments and the debates that

take place in this House every year, no Minister can go very far astray either as regards patronage or in the management of the railways. He is brought under direct review of the House and the country, and I am strongly of opinion that, so far as the working staff of the railways is concerned, it will be found under this Bill that things will not be better for the management by Railway Commissioners. It is quite true that this Bill proposes to appoint a Board of Appeal, but we can get that appointed just as well under the system of political management as under management by Commissioners. There is one point in connection with this matter—it is a matter of detail, but I wish to say here that in Committee I shall move to have it struck out if the amendment is not carried—and that is with regard to the fines. With regard to fines, an appeal to one of the Commissioners will be final. Now, that would only mean that instead of dismissing men or disrating them heavy fines would be inflicted, and that would bring about a feeling of great irritation between the men and the Commissioners. I think that in all such cases men feel that an injustice has been done them. What is the nature of some of the fines that have been inflicted? Why, Sir, some of them are terrible in their severity. Talk about taking 6d. or 1s. a day off a man and letting that go on for years! That proposal in the Bill with regard to fines is one to which I take great exception, and I shall move in Committee that the Bill shall be altered in that respect, unless the amendment is agreed to. Now, the Premier said that the country had indorsed this Bill. I say, No such thing. I have spoken many times in Dunedin on this question of the control of our railways, and the question has always been argued on the lines that the Government should take the control of the railways, that they should be vested in the Crown; and, so far as any expression of opinion on the part of the people in Dunedin is concerned, it has been more in that direction than in support of the Government Bill. I shall do all I can to retest the railways in the Crown, and, failing that, I shall then assist to make this Bill as workable a measure as possible. I do not think it is a workable measure at the present time, and I do not think that we have gained anything by the change in the Commissioners. This Government have always railed against the late Government. Why did they not send for a Commissioner who would have stood in the eyes of the country as a railway expert? If they had done that, then we could have given some guarantee with regard to the Commissionship, instead of appointing these Commissioners for nine months. It is true the making of so short an appointment did preclude them from bringing any experienced expert to control the railways, because his salary would have to be considerably larger than is here foreshadowed. They could not expect to bring a railway expert to this country without giving him some guarantee of tenure of office. It is out of the question to suppose that the Government could bring out an expert for any-

Mr. Earnshaw

thing like the salary that is proposed to be given, and that is why I say the Premier, instead of appointing these three Commissioners, ought to have taken a bolder course and have assumed the responsibility of managing the railways. He should have met the House with that proposal. The House might have condemned or approved of his action, and that would have decided the question whether the railways should remain under the Commissioners or under Responsible Government.

Mr. CROWTHER.—I am desirous of following this Bill with an inquiring mind and a good temper. The last two speakers have been rather cross-grained, and I have thought during the last five or ten minutes that it would be a great charity to allow the Premier to go to bed early. It would be extremely unmerciful to keep him up here until seven o'clock in the morning again, so I do not intend to occupy very much time. I have made up my mind that this Bill contemplates that no Commissioners can work under it. Therefore no Commissioners will work under it, and that means that the amendment should be carried. The Bill should be sent back. The Premier should toe the mark on these lines, and bring in a Bill providing that the Government shall manage the railways. I would just ask honourable members to note one of the summary clauses, and I ask if the present Commissioners will work under it: "The Minister of Railways may require Commissioners to suggest schemes for reducing expenditure, and, if disapproved of, may propose his own scheme." He proposes a scheme as against theirs, and of course his is right and theirs of course is wrong.

Mr. SEDDON.—That law is in force in Victoria.

Mr. CROWTHER.—The Premier sets himself up at once as a separate authority. I expect he will say to the Commissioners, "I anticipate that you will fail, and I will show you how to do it." I think that fairly demonstrates the position of the matter, and, that being the case, it seems to me that the Commissioners will feel the position of being subordinated. I understand that there are in the Service already, in the principal cities, at any rate, men who are quite able to fill the position and to perform the duties of Railway Commissioners, and therefore I say there is no necessity for the country spending this sum of £3,000 in paying these Commissioners. I believe that the Premier contemplates this; and, if the Bill contemplates anything further than this, it simply contemplates that the Minister shall serve a sort of apprenticeship to these Commissioners, and that, after they have taught him the business, he will say to them, "You can go now." Another feature of the Bill is that a Board is to be set up to which the employes can appeal; but, if this Board is to have any power at all, it will have to be amended. I once was a member of a similar Board to this, I think under a Minister also who is still a member of this House: I refer to the Hon. Mr. Mitchelson. An inquiry came before myself and two other members of the

Board in Auckland as to the rights and wrongs of two engines that collided at a certain station. Neither we nor the Minister nor any one ever found out anything satisfactory in connection with that case, and no one has ever known what the finding was. I anticipate that this Bill will be just the same; and, with all due respect to the honourable gentleman who has brought it in, if the finding of the one Commissioner and two gentlemen who are to constitute that Board, to whom the employes are to be able to appeal, is not to be sufficient without that finding going back to the Commissioners, then I for one would not act on such a Board, because it is simply neither more nor less than setting three men up to be buffers.

An Hon. MEMBER.—No.

Mr. CROWTHER.—That is my view of the matter. I think the Minister will have quite enough to do without reviewing the acts of the Board that is to be set up to perform certain duties, and very likely rescinding what it has done. Where is the satisfaction to arise, or the encouragement to come from, for the employes, or to those gentlemen who form the Board? I am not going to occupy the time of the House any longer; but if this Bill contemplates working without the Commissioners I believe the time has arrived when the members of the House are prepared for it. I believe they are, although the honourable member for Marsden says "No," and therefore I think the amendment is in the right direction. I shall vote for it because I believe in the direction in which this Bill goes, as I believe if the Commissioners are not a success to-day they will not be a success twelve months hence. Let us then sweep them away at once. If we are going to manage the railways, at any rate, for some little time to come, their services for the future will be no longer needed.

Mr. WILSON.—I should like to say a word or two, as I intend to vote for the amendment. I am entirely in favour of the Act as it at present stands on the statute-book, and I believe that our railways were properly managed by the late Commissioners, and that we have received good service from them. I should have much preferred that these services should have been retained. I have no knowledge of the new Commissioners. It is quite clear that the House has made up its mind to pass the Bill, as not a single one of the Government supporters has said a word upon this Bill,—or it may be that the late sitting last night has knocked them up. This Bill reminds me very much of a person buying a horse. If the owner wants £20 for it, it is usual to offer £15, and after much talk they split the difference. This Bill splits the difference. There are only two ways of dealing with the question: either you must give the railways into the hands of the Commissioners entirely, or else you ought to take them back and keep them in the hands of Parliament. This Bill splits the difference between the two, and I am entirely against it. No doubt, the reason this Bill has been brought down is that the Whips

have been around the House and find that there is a majority in favour of Parliament having the control again, but, as there is some doubt about it, the Minister, desiring to get his way, has got the party to agree to such terms as the Bill contains. Such being the case, I should prefer to revert to the old system of Ministerial control, instead of having this patched system as herein proposed. For that reason I intend to vote for the amendment, which will be lost: then I shall vote against the Bill. If the Minister had full power, the whole policy of the railways would be his own; and if he has this power in connection with the Railway Commissioners he may easily blame them if he wants an excuse. They will be used as buffers. If the Government have the control, the Minister is responsible to this House, and he will have no right to say, "It is not my doing, as the Commissioners have been appointed." I think it would be very much better now to give him entire control, rather than what is proposed under this Bill; and if the House wanted to check the Minister it might be done by the appointment of a parliamentary officer, an expert in railways appointed by Parliament and responsible only to Parliament, but without any control over the railways at all. He would see what was going on, and could report to Parliament once a year. Such an officer would be dependent on Parliament entirely, and might be able to give us useful information. I believe that is what is wanted; but we are not likely to get it. The Minister wants the power in his own hands to use patronage; but I believe it would not be in the interests of the working of the railways if it was. I wished to say these few words as I intend to vote for the amendment, and also against the Bill on the second reading.

Mr. G. J. SMITH.—Sir, I do not intend to take up very much time upon this Bill, as I recognise that the members of this House are somewhat tired after their exertions of last evening, and, were it not that I consider the Bill of very great importance both to the constituency which I represent and also to this House and the colony generally, I should have abstained from saying anything upon the matter at all. In speaking to the second reading I am in somewhat of a difficulty.

11.0. Speaking as a candidate in Christchurch, I expressed my own views, and I find the views I then expressed are not embodied in this Bill; and the dilemma in which I find myself is this: I must either give way in respect to the views I then expressed, and which views I now hold, or, if I venture to criticize a Government measure, or deal with it in any way in contradiction to the attitude taken up by the Ministry, I am liable to be told that I am not recognised as a follower, and that any remarks I make will have no effect. Well, notwithstanding that, and notwithstanding the remarks the Premier thought fit to address to me last night, I shall venture to make one or two remarks on the Bill; and if, in the course of time, my attitude in the House has

not given satisfaction to my constituents, I shall then meet with my reward. On the other hand, if I venture to do what I consider to be right and proper in this House, irrespective of the treatment I receive, I have no doubt I shall receive a continuance of the confidence bestowed on me at the last election. Now to come to the Bill. I listened with very great interest to the remarks of the Premier in introducing the Bill. I thought that his arguments from his standpoint were exceedingly good. I also listened with great interest to the remarks of the honourable the senior member for Wellington City (Sir R. Stout); and it is noteworthy that on this occasion the Premier and the senior member for Wellington City agree. But I still find myself somewhat in the position of "odd man out." I do not believe in political control of our railways. I say at once that, while I do not believe that the control of the railways under the old Commissioners was entirely satisfactory to the country, I am certain it was not satisfactory to the employés. There was among the mercantile people of the country a certain amount of dissatisfaction. That, however, will always be, it does not matter who has control of the railways. You will never give satisfaction to all the mercantile people, to the farmers, and to the colony. But there was a very large amount of discontent among the employés. They felt they were not being fairly treated. They felt they had no sort of appeal—no mode of redress; and the Service, so far as I can find out, was full of discontent from end to end. I am glad to say that, so far as I know, that state of things has, to a very large extent, been altered during the last few months. Certain charges have been made this evening; some of them, I believe, from what I hear from outside sources, have a large amount of truth in them. I desire, so far as these charges are concerned, to be very guarded in my language from either expressing approval or disapproval of the charges; but I have been told outside the House, by those not connected with the department in any way, that these charges are undoubtedly true, and I was quite prepared to hear some such charges made before this House. But, while these charges have been made, and whilst discontent has existed in the past, I would ask honourable members in the House, would political control pure and simple be any better than the control of the Commissioners? I venture to say that, so far as the country is concerned, political control pure and simple would be a very bad thing for the colony. I was in the colony from 1880 to 1887—I think it was in 1887 the Commissioners were appointed—and I know from what I heard in business circles during those years that the political control was anything but satisfactory to the mercantile community. Political control would be bad, in my opinion, because of the pressure that would be brought to bear upon the Ministers. I cannot think for a minute that the Minister, having full control of our railways, would be able to withstand the pressure that from time to time would be brought to bear

Mr. G. J. Smith

upon him, first of all, for appointments to the service. Now, so far as appointments to the service are concerned, I think these appointments are not very satisfactorily made even now, but I affirm my strong belief that with political control the appointments would be infinitely worse. Then, again, political control would bring about pressure for concessions to districts which were represented by members in this House of "the right colour" and of the necessary pliability of nature; while those who were represented by members who possibly did not harmonize with the "colour" of the Ministry for the time being, or who did not show the necessary pliability of nature, would have their districts neglected. Any concession, though it might be reasonable and just, would be refused; and I believe that from either the standpoint of the colony or the standpoint of the employés political control would be bad. I believe, further, that the system of Commissioners should be continued, but modified. I recognise, with the Premier, and with several other speakers this evening, that it is utterly wrong for this House to hand over such a large property as this—fifteen millions' worth of colonial property—to the hands of an irresponsible Board. I therefore cordially agree that the Minister should have a seat on the Board of Commissioners; but I would limit his power on the Board. I stated in Christchurch—and I have seen no reason to alter my view—that in my opinion the best Board of Control would be a Board of Commissioners consisting of two members with a Minister, and that they should have equal voting-power. The Commissioners should attend to the business part of the concern, while the Minister would supply the policy, as laid down by the House, and look after the general interests of the colony. Let him attend the Board's meeting, and let the majority of votes decide any matter that is brought before the Board. That is as far as I would go with Ministerial control. It seems to me that as the Bill is drawn there is neither control by Commissioners nor by the Ministry. If the Bill had been drawn to take over the control entirely I could have understood it, but the Bill, to my mind, appears on the surface to provide for the railways being controlled by Commissioners with a Minister, while in reality it gives Ministerial control pure and simple. Turn to clause 9 of the Bill, and we find there a section providing that Ministers may determine the position of stations, *et cetera*. The Minister for the time being can direct where stations are to be located.

Mr. SEDDON.—Construction.

Mr. G. J. SMITH.—Oh, no.

Mr. SEDDON.—Oh, yes; it is construction.

Mr. G. J. SMITH.—I think it is location of stations. But beyond that there is a very remarkable proviso,—

"Provided that the Minister shall, before deciding upon any matters mentioned in the said section, obtain the advice of the Commissioners upon such matters."

Sir, that proviso, in my opinion, is not worth

the paper it is written on. The Commissioners, of course, advise, and if it does not suit the Minister for the time being he will ignore the advice given; and, as I say, Ministers have the power when they choose to exercise it. I object to the Ministers having that power. Then, under section 10 the Minister may request the Commissioners to bring down certain financial proposals; if he disapproves he sends them back with some scheme of his own. Then, the section goes on,—

“If any doubt or difference of opinion occurs respecting the provisions of this section, the same may be finally determined by the Governor in Council.”

Well, Sir, I read that to mean Ministerial control again. I do not see how the Commissioners are to be represented if there is to be an Order in Council. Section 13 is a most extraordinary provision, to my way of thinking. There is not, so far as I am aware, any Government department where there is such a section or such a power as is contained in this particular section:—

“Notwithstanding anything in the said Act contained, the Commissioners shall not, without sanction of an Order in Council, increase the salary of an officer or employé whose annual salary or wages is more than three hundred pounds, or appoint or promote any person to any office the annual salary or wages of which is more than three hundred pounds.”

Now, Sir, I cannot understand such a clause as that. If the Commissioners are to be prohibited from granting an increase of salary, in the terms of that proviso, to any officers in the service, however deserving such officers may be, before an Order in Council is obtained authorising the increase, I cannot understand the necessity for it. I am not aware that any such restriction is imposed on any department of the Government service.

Mr. SEDDON.—Yes.

Mr. G. J. SMITH.—It may be so, but I am not aware of it. Then, again, in section 15 there is an important exception provided. The original section of the Act of 1887 says,—

“The Commissioners shall, notwithstanding, have the power to appoint to any position or grade, if they think fit, without examination as aforesaid, any person of known ability or possessing special qualifications not engaged in the railway service. No such appointment shall be made unless the Commissioners shall have previously certified under their seal to the Governor that there is no person in the railway service fit and qualified to be promoted to such appointment, and shall have obtained his sanction to such appointment.”

But section 15 of this Bill says, “Except in the case of a person transferred from any department of the Civil Service.” Now, that simply means that an officer may be transferred from the Civil Service into the railway service, and that, of course, makes provision for fresh appointments to the Civil Service. Then, I have the same objection to the 16th clause as the honourable member for Auckland City (Mr. Crowther) had. An Appeal

Board is constituted for the employés. The Board may hear and determine any appeals that may be made to it, but every decision of the Board must be submitted for the approval of the Minister before it can take effect. That, again, to my way of thinking, is Ministerial control. Then, according to section 20, either House of Parliament may pass a resolution vesting the railways in Her Majesty the Queen. That is bringing in political control pure and simple. Now, I think it would have been very much better for the Minister—who, I admit, believes in political control—to bring down a Bill granting political control at once, and let us have a straight-fought-out vote on the question. I object to a Bill being brought down that may enable the whole thing to be swept away simply by a resolution of one House. In addition to that, subsection (2) of that clause says that the appointments of the Commissioners may be determined, but that in such event they shall receive appointments from the Governor as officers of the railway service of the colony at the same rate of salary until the term for which they had been appointed expires. To my way of thinking, that is an utterly ridiculous provision, and I say that, so far as the three Railway Commissioners are concerned, a Bill of this description is a farce. The much straighter course would be to have a vote of the House taken on the question of Ministerial control *versus* control by a joint Board, so as to let us know where we are. I do not propose to occupy further time on the Bill. I shall not vote for the amendment proposed by the honourable member for Wellington Suburbs; I shall vote for the Bill brought down by the Ministry, at the same time reserving to myself the right of moving certain amendments in Committee, with the view of bringing the Bill into line with what I consider to be for the best interests of the colony.

Mr. SAUNDERS.—I do not intend to occupy much time. The Bill does not appear to me to require very much consideration to know that I ought to vote against it. I should, like the honourable member who has just sat down, have preferred something very much more definite. In fact, I should prefer a Bill which provided either for Ministerial control pure and simple, or for the Commissioners to have the general control in all details—the railways always being controlled more or less either by the votes of this House or by the Ministry with regard to matters which affected great principles in the policy of the country. I do not think there ever would have been any difficulty, even if the old Commissioners had remained as they were, if we had given the House sufficient control in that respect. In fact, I do not think that any suggestion as to the general policy coming formally and deliberately from this House would have been disregarded by the late Commissioners. That appears to me to be the one thing needful to make the control of the railways by the Commissioners more satisfactory than political control is likely to be. This Bill does mischief. It takes away the responsi-

bility from any one to a certain extent. The Commissioners could not freely and effectively exercise their functions if they knew that those functions were always and constantly under the check of the Minister, as they would be under this Bill. The Minister having a casting-vote and an original vote, and appointing the Commissioners themselves, and those Commissioners being subject to dismissal, there can be no doubt in the world that the Minister of Railways would always be in a position to entirely control the Board, and to get his own way on that Board. That being the case, I think it is much better that it should be openly avowed that he is wholly and solely responsible;—it is very much better than that the position proposed in this Bill should be occupied by any one. The Bill as it now stands will have the effect of taking away any effectual interest and control from the permanent heads of the department, and giving it to a Minister who will be liable to be changed any day, who may know nothing about the subject to begin with, and who by the time that he has learned something will be very likely exchanged for some one else. If good railway management is desired, then the Government should have voted for the Elective Executive Bill which was introduced the other night. If the Executive were elected, and probably held their offices with a considerable amount of permanence, this House in the first instance could have chosen a Minister of Railways admirably fitted for the position. If we had taken the Swiss system we should have the whole colony or the whole world to choose from, and we could select any man who was most qualified and fitted to manage the railways; and, if we judge by the experience of Sweden, we find that only two Ministers since 1848 have been removed from their position against their own wish and consent: so that in that case we should have, first of all, to choose the best man in the colony, and that man would probably remain there gaining experience as long as he was in a fit condition to conduct the railways, and wished to do so. That would have been the solution of all our difficulties. And although the Premier told us to-night that this is much the most important subject that we were likely to have to consider, apart from the policy Bills, I say that the consideration of the Elective Executive Bill the other night was a vastly more important subject than any other we are likely to consider in this House, and one which would have settled this question, and a great many other questions, in a far more satisfactory way than any way in which we are likely to settle it to-night. At any rate, I hope this Bill will be altered so that the Minister's control shall be as open and evident as it is absolute. He, and he only, would then be held responsible by this House, and every one would know it, and that the Commissioners under him are simply his servants. That would be one simple system. The other would be that the Commissioners should have absolute and uncontrolled supervision of our railways, except in matters of policy, which required the interference of

Mr. Saunders

this House. That is the position I shall take in this matter. I consider that either of the plans I have suggested would be very much better than the sham Commissioners and the absolute political control which are proposed in this Bill.

The House divided on the question, "That the words proposed to be omitted stand part of the question."

AYES, 47.

Allen	Harris	Mills
Bell	Heke	Mitchelson
Buchanan	Hogg	Morrison
Buick	Houston	Parata
Button	Hutchison, G.	Pinkerton
Carncross	Kelly, J. W.	Pirani
Carnell	Lang	Reeves
Collins	Larnach	Russell, G. W.
Duncan	Mackenzie, T.	Russell, W. R.
Flatman	Massey	Seddon
Fraser	McGuire	Smith, G. J.
Graham	McKenzie, J.	Thompson
Green	McKenzie, R.	Ward.
Guinness	McLachlan	<i>Tellers.</i>
Hall	McNab	Lawry
Hall-Jones	Meredith	Montgomery.

NOES, 7.

Earnshaw	Stout	<i>Tellers.</i>
McGowan	Wilson.	Crowther
Saunders		Newman.

PAIRS.

<i>For.</i>	<i>Against.</i>
Buddo	Pere
Cadman	Mitchelson
Joyce	Duthie
Maslin	Button
Steward.	Te Ao.

Majority for, 40.

Amendment negatived.

11.30. Mr. G. W. RUSSELL.—Sir, I regret that the Bill now before the House does not go the entire distance I could wish. I could not support the amendment moved by the honourable member for Wellington Suburbs, because, under the circumstances, an amendment moved in that way seems to assume an importance I am not prepared to give it; but when the Bill is brought into Committee I shall be prepared to vote in the direction of securing a return to parliamentary control. I consider the Bill is defective, because it is illogical. There is no logical halting-place between placing railways under Ministerial control on the one side and under absolute control by Commissioners on the other. You must have one thing or the other; and I hold it to be the wish of the country—at any rate, of those who follow the Liberal party—that they should be under control of Parliament, and I shall vote in that direction. I should like to say a word or two in regard to the statement of the leader of the Opposition as to the great success of the management of the railways under the Commissioners as compared with their previous management. I have prepared a return as to the cost of the railways per traffic-mile in 1887 as against the cost in 1894. I should like to point out that these figures are taken from the rail-

way returns, and report accurately the cost per train-mile, and the difference is decidedly in favour of Government control:—

PER TRAFFIC-MILE.

	1887. d.	1894. d.
Total proportion of each class of expenditure to mileage and revenue ...	55-76	56-69
Maintenance ...	20-14	20-70
Locomotive ...	13-27	13-71
Carriage and wagon repairs ...	4-72	4-35
Traffic expenses ...	14-18	15-51
General charges ...	2-91	2-93
Sundries ...	0-54	0-54

To put the matter clearly, I may state it in this way: that, while in connection with one-eighth of the expenditure the result under the Commissioners shows a decrease, on seven-eighths of the expenditure the cost per train-mile shows an increase under the management of the Commissioners as compared with the management of the lines in 1887, when they were managed by the Hon. Mr. Richardson as Minister of Railways. I think this effectually disposes of the argument which has been used so frequently throughout the country that under the Commissioners there has been a great improvement in the cost of management. That may be correct if you take one set of figures; but the real test is—and every railway man will tell you so—What is the cost per train-mile, because it was very easy for the Commissioners to do what they did. They cut out many of the train services, and declared that to be a reduction. The real test is, What is the cost per train-mile? And I say that the table I have read, the figures of which honourable members will find in Return No. 4 of the Railway Department for 1887 and 1894, effectually proves the statement that I have made. I should now like to say a few words in regard to what I think the policy of the country should be with respect to railway management. I differ entirely from the policy pursued in days past in so far as it proceeded on these lines: that those men who were compelled to use the railways should have the last possible penny extracted from them. I maintain that railway management should not be so much for the purpose of squeezing the last penny out of those compelled to use the lines, but that the railways should be used as a colonising agency, and that their primary object should be to extend settlement, and promote the production of those staple products which must be the wealth of the country. In so far as railway management can do this it will have a very good effect. Let me point out that the indirect benefits of a cheap railway policy will compensate for any loss of revenue that may follow. This will happen in this way: Supposing you take a block of a hundred thousand acres which lies fifty miles from a shipping port, the test of the value of that land will be the profit that can be derived from it, and if by reducing the railway-freights you increase the profit that can be derived from the land, undoubtedly you increase the capital value of the land. The result of this will be that, while you might at present be deriving land-tax

from the land at the average of £5 per acre, if you increase the value of the block by cheap railway-freights to £6 or £7 per acre you not only promote settlement on the block, but you derive land-tax from a larger value, which would help to bring to the revenue indirectly what you might appear to be losing by lowering the railway charges. Another thing is this: Our railways should go hand-in-hand with our Customs duties. We are to a certain extent a Protectionist country.

Hon. MEMBERS.—No, no.

Mr. G. W. RUSSELL.—I say we are. Our Customs tariff proceeds on three principles: first of all, that you levy duties in order to get revenue; secondly, that in getting that revenue you help as far as you can those industries which are natural to the country; and thirdly, that you should bear in mind the just rights of your consumers. The second principle is as important as the first; and, while we have to secure revenue, where we can do that so as to help the industries of the country our business is to do it, and to that extent we are a Protectionist country. What do we find in connection with our railway-freights? That, while we give concessions to various articles under our Customs tariff, as soon as we get them on to our railways we take away any benefit that has been given them by low Customs duties. If we are to help the industries of the country there ought to be a differential tariff in favour of the industries of the country, and we ought not to charge so much for carrying those goods that are made in New Zealand as for those that are made in other countries and brought here. Now, I wish to say a word or two with regard to the men. We were told by the Premier that the Commissioners had reduced their estimates; but it is well known that for several months they have been employing the workshops hands only five days in each week. That is a grossly unfair policy so far as the workshops hands are concerned. It is a special tax on a section of the population—a section only of the railway hands. I am glad it is shortly to come to an end, and I trust such a method of lowering expenditure, by attacking the wages section of the department, will never be reverted to. When the Bill comes into Committee it is my intention to move in the direction of having certain clauses that are in the Post and Telegraph Classification Act brought into the Bill. While I am in favour of political control so far as the policy of the railway management is concerned, I think that the men employed should know their exact position in the service, and should have an assurance from Parliament that they will not have others placed over them unfairly and unjustly. The only way this can be done is by the classification of the men, so that there may be printed lists from year to year, and every man may know his exact position, as is the case in the Postal and Telegraph Department. It is my wish to help to make this a workable measure, and I trust, if the Government find when the Bill is in Com-

mittee a majority of the House are in favour of resuming Ministerial control, they will accept the responsibility; and I believe, if the railways do come into the hands of the Government, and the interests of the men are protected in the manner I speak of, once more the railways will occupy their proper place as the great colonising agency in the country. There is no doubt that the country has got tired of the control that has been exercised during the last three or four years. It is evident, so far as the Commissioners are concerned, that every attempt that has been made to secure concessions from them for the great staple industries has been met with an opposition that certainly was not to be expected. Take as an illustration the frozen-meat industry of the colony. I can give no better proof of their hidebound policy than the manner in which the Commissioners have set themselves against making any concession to that, which is undoubtedly one of the greatest industries in the colony. What has been the position in regard to this trade in other respects than the railway-freights? I will just read to the House what the position is. During the last eight or ten years the steamer freight from New Zealand Home has been reduced from 2d. per pound to 1d., and the freezing from 3d. to 1½d. per pound.

An Hon. MEMBER.—No.

Mr. G. W. RUSSELL.—I am speaking of the Canterbury charges. The insurance has been reduced from 10 per cent. to 3½ per cent.; the London charges, from 3d. to 1d.; wharfage at Lyttelton, from 2s. to 4d. But the railway freight is still at 8s. 6d. per ton, as it was in the first place.

An Hon. MEMBER.—For what distance?

Mr. G. W. RUSSELL.—About fifteen miles. And it will surprise honourable members to know that the railway-freight in connection with frozen meat is the same as the freight for fresh meat. There has never been a special rate for frozen meat. I am also told that, while on the New Zealand railways our shippers are charged 8s. 6d. for a comparatively short distance, on the New South Wales railways the charge from Deniliquin to Melbourne, which is nearly two hundred miles, is identically the same as that charged by the New Zealand Railway Commissioners for about fifteen miles. These facts prove that the Commissioners are not prepared in any sense to meet the interests and demands of the public; and, if our producers are not to be handicapped in connection with the coming fight between Australia and New Zealand in the frozen-meat trade, there must be concession in this matter of the freight. I shall not delay the House with any further remarks. I am sorry the Bill does not go the distance I want, but I hope that by the time it emerges from Committee it will be improved—at any rate, so far as the resumption of parliamentary control is concerned.

Mr. BUCHANAN.—Sir, I do not intend to detain the House at any length, though, as an American would say, I guess the Bill will not pass its second reading to-night, because a

Mr. G. W. Russell

number of honourable members still wish to speak on the Bill, but for some reason or another best known to themselves and the Government they are holding back, with the idea of speaking on Tuesday. The honourable gentleman who spoke last, like a good many others both inside and outside the House, professed to know a great deal about the Railway Commissioners; but they are really only anxious to wipe them out, as the honourable gentleman expressed it,—regardless of how grossly they misrepresent them. The honourable gentleman who has just sat down has made gross misrepresentations as to what they did in regard to the frozen-meat trade;—that they had made no reductions in railway freight; and he went on to make invidious comparisons between their policy and the reductions made by the shipping companies, the salesmen in London, and the insurance companies. There is no analogy whatever between the carriage of frozen-meat and the business of the frozen-meat companies, for instance. The business of the Railway Commissioners is the very simple one of carrying frozen meat as they would any other article of commerce, and they were therefore able to fix charges at a reasonable rate from the beginning of the trade. The freezing companies, on the other hand, had first to learn their business, and were only able to make large reductions after they had done so. Similarly in the case of the shipping and insurance companies, as well as the salesmen. The honourable gentleman a few days ago gave us some figures about the number of sheep consumed in the colony, and made some amusing mistakes. He ought to have gone to the proper sources for his information about the frozen-meat trade before quoting figures that were entirely incorrect. The frozen-meat trade commenced at a freight of no less than 2d., and, instead of being reduced to 1d., it has now been brought in some cases considerably below that figure. In Australia they get their frozen meat carried at 3d., and in the case of beef at even less than that. The railway freight for frozen meat here has never been an unreasonably high one, but I dare say it could be reduced without any serious loss to the railway service. To say that the railway freight from Deniliquin to Melbourne is the same as from Belfast to Lyttelton is to talk nonsense. No frozen meat has yet been carried from Deniliquin, because no meat has ever been frozen there. They have let a contract to erect freezing-works there, but they can have scarcely laid the foundations yet.

Mr. G. W. RUSSELL.—That is the freight which is to be charged.

Mr. BUCHANAN.—The honourable gentleman must really take a fresh departure, and realise that accuracy is worth something, or he cannot expect us to receive with any confidence any figures he gives to the House. I say it is nonsense that railway freight from Deniliquin to Melbourne, a distance of at least a hundred and fifty miles, can be as low as on the distance of eleven or twelve miles between Belfast and Lyttelton. Now let me turn to the

Bill before the House. It is difficult for me to find words in which to characterize my opinion of the Bill. The Minister for Public Works has been pursuing a most extraordinary course for a long time in connection with the railways of the colony. While the former Railway Commissioners were in office he lost no opportunity of opposing them, no opportunity of misrepresenting them, no opportunity of grossly misrepresenting them before the country. Even in his speech to-night he told the House that the Railway Commissioners had been wrongfully deriving something like £18,000 a year from land and sources other than the railway service. And he would leave the House to believe that this sort of thing had only commenced when the Railway Commissioners were appointed some five years ago. Why did not the honourable gentleman put the whole of the facts before the House, and inform them that before the Commissioners took office at all the railway service was receiving £14,000 a year from these so-called outside sources? He must know very well that it is not from Crown lands that this revenue is derived.

Mr. SEDDON.—It is Crown lands.

Mr. BUCHANAN.—How much are the Commissioners deriving from Crown lands? A very small proportion—a mere trifle out of the whole £18,000. The principal portion is from lands purchased for railway purposes, but which are not all required at the present time. Take, for instance, the case of Palmerston North. The honourable gentleman knows that the Commissioners were forced to buy lands the whole of which they could not use for railway purposes, and they are now rightly deriving revenue from these unused portions, because the cost is charged against the railways.

Mr. PIRANI.—The Government bought the land.

Mr. BUCHANAN.—Well, what is the difference? Then, the honourable gentleman seeks to deprive the Commissioners of all effective power, but, instead of doing that in a manly way, he pretends to retain them in their present position while at the same time really reducing them to the merest ciphers. Under the new state of affairs we shall have the honourable gentleman pulling the strings in all directions, appointing officers and employés of "the right colour," and when any trouble arises he will cast all the blame on the Railway Commissioners; but if there is any credit to be derived we shall find the honourable gentleman coolly appropriating it. Then, he says the Railway Commissioners ordered a lot of railway material that was never required.

Mr. SEDDON.—I was referring to the Victorian railways.

Mr. BUCHANAN.—If I have misunderstood the honourable gentleman I regret it. He also covets sole control over all salaries exceeding £300, and gave us no sensible reason why such an extraordinary course should be followed, but it furnishes another proof of what I have already stated—that the Railway Commissioners would, under this Bill, be nothing

but the merest creatures in the hands of the Minister; and I for one, if we cannot alter the Bill in Committee, shall be very glad indeed to vote for the amendment of the honourable member for Wellington Suburbs, because it would be very much better to have the railways openly and frankly under the control of the Minister, and to hold him responsible for them, instead of being nominally under the Commissioners but in reality under the honourable gentleman in this covert and roundabout way. He also condemns the lengthy leave of absence given to half a dozen officers of the railway service, but he, very unfairly, failed to inform the House of the great benefits derived from the information obtained by those officers while travelling in other parts of the world. The honourable gentleman should, in common justice, have told the House that the leave of absence given to these officers had been repaid over and over again to the colony.

Mr. SEDDON.—Mr. Rotheram alone was sent Home on the business of the Commissioners.

Mr. BUCHANAN.—And the honourable gentleman was anxious to get rid of that officer after all his valuable services.

Mr. SEDDON.—No.

Mr. BUCHANAN.—Provision is made in this Bill for appeals by employés in the railway service, and I think that is a step in the right direction. Even the officers themselves should be glad to have a Board of Appeal, so that they may not be accused of doing injustice to the men. The honourable gentleman told the House in a very confident way that the colony had determined upon a change,—that the appointment of the two new Commissioners had been welcomed by business-men, manufacturers, farmers, and users of the railways throughout the colony. I have a pamphlet here, which I dare say the honourable gentleman has seen, and within its pages we find resolutions and letters from pastoral societies, farmers, settlers, and manufacturers against the removal of the late Commissioners. And yet we are told by the honourable gentleman that the change has the universal approval of the whole colony. So far from the country at large approving of the change, I am satisfied that if we had the Referendum in force the country would be found largely against the honourable gentleman. To say that the administration of the late Railway Commissioners has not been a success is to deny facts obvious to every impartial man who studies the railway history of this and the other colonies. The average return from our

12.0. railways for the three years previous to the Railway Commissioners coming into office was £2 8s. per cent., while that for the five years they have been in office was £2 18s. per cent. Can it also be said that the *personnel* and discipline of the railway service have not been very much improved, as well as the rolling-stock and permanent-way, and that most of these improvements have not also come out of revenue? Then, again, he told us that

the value of land could be increased or decreased according to the caprice of the Commissioners. The honourable gentleman should surely have admitted that there was scarcely an article carried upon the railway the freight of which had not been reduced during the term of the Railway Commissioners. And yet he suggested that these gentlemen had actually done enormous injury and injustice to farmers, when we know, as a matter of fact, that they helped them forward in every possible way. The honourable gentleman mentioned various items, such as lime, manure, and similar articles, carried by the railways, suggesting that the freights on these articles were abnormally high, despite the fact that the Commissioners had made large reductions upon almost every article carried on the railways.

Mr. SEDDON.—They had to have pressure brought to bear upon them time after time before they did it.

Mr. BUCHANAN.—Well, the honourable gentleman himself has had sometimes to succumb to pressure; and, the Railway Commissioners being only human, and naturally wishing to retain as much revenue as possible, surely it is to their credit that they did sometimes give way to pressure. The honourable gentleman also told us that the Victorian railways had been a failure under the management of Commissioners. The reply by which he was met on that point was very effective—that the Commissioners there had never had a free hand,—that political pressure was constantly put upon them which they could not very well resist. New South Wales, on the other hand, could show most successful administration under Commissioners for a good many years, because they had full power; and to say, as the Premier has said, that complaints being made against them was necessarily any argument was simply playing with an important question. No doubt they had had imputations hurled against them upon no sounder foundation than that upon which the honourable gentleman himself had attempted to damage the Railway Commissioners here. Why, Sir, about a year ago the Premier sought to damage the Commissioners in connection with some coal tenders on the West Coast, and charged them with favouritism in giving advertisements to papers of a certain "colour," while refusing them to those in opposition. It was only the other evening that he asserted that £11,000 had been largely squandered by the Railway Commissioners in advertisements; but out of that sum no less than £940 had been paid to the *Lyttelton Times*, a strong supporter of the Government. And yet the Commissioners were accused by the Premier of favouritism by distributing advertisements to the papers opposed to the Government! These are merely samples of the charges made on various occasions by the honourable gentleman: and, worse than that, he has been guilty upon various occasions of inciting insubordination amongst the railway employes, to the grave injury of the service. The honourable gentleman should not have so abused his high

Mr. Buchanan

position. I regret that the Minister of Education is not in the House, but it is right to remind the Committee that he had a meeting of a private and secret character with the railway men, from which the reporters were excluded; and the popular belief is—and I believe it to be right—that he made certain promises to them, which have since been fulfilled.

Mr. SEDDON.—Sir, I think it right here, as a point of order, to say that the Minister of Education was charged with this by the senior member for Wellington City, that he denied it, and that the honourable member for Wellington City accepted his denial. It is scarcely right, in the Minister's absence, for the honourable member to repeat that charge.

Mr. SPEAKER.—I recollect the denial of the Minister of Education, and the honourable member for Wairarapa will not be in order in pressing such a charge, seeing that it has been denied by the Minister.

Mr. BUCHANAN.—Well, Sir, I do not wish to go against your ruling, but the Minister of Education admitted that he attended the meeting, and that reporters were not present.

Mr. SPEAKER.—But you appeared to me to go on to say that certain threats of punishment were made, and the inference I drew was that punishment had been inflicted in accordance with the threats made at the secret meeting. That is a statement the Minister has denied.

Mr. BUCHANAN.—Well, Sir, I disclaim at once any wish or intention to dispute or evade your ruling, or to refuse acceptance of an absolute denial by the Minister or by any other honourable member, so long as that denial is a specific one; but I claim the right to point out that the Minister himself admitted speaking strongly against the Commissioners and distinctly stating, as I understood him, that they should be removed: and, as a matter of fact, those Commissioners were removed upon the first opportunity.

Mr. SPEAKER.—I thought you spoke of some punishment inflicted on the Railway employes.

Mr. BUCHANAN.—No, Sir; I was referring to the removal of the Railway Commissioners in January. Following on, the Premier asked whether the democracy was incapable of ruling itself; but, as a matter of fact, he well knew that the Railway Commissioners were responsible to this House, and if that is not government by the democracy I do not know what is. But, as usual, he was trying to draw a red-herring across the scent—asking members of this House, and the country, to believe that these Railway Commissioners were independent of all control, when, as a matter of fact, they have always been responsible to this House, and nobody has ever brought anything forward to disprove it. Sir, if we prove unable to alter this Bill in Committee, or to discharge it altogether from the Order Paper, I shall certainly vote against the retention of the Commissioners, because I

should much prefer to see the Government directly responsible.

Mr. HOGG.—The honourable member for Wairarapa has made a characteristic speech; he has been hitting all round rather blindly, and, in consequence, he has very frequently missed his aim. He has accused other honourable members of misrepresenting, but I think, if he continues as he has been doing, he will become a very good adept in that art before long himself. The fact is, there is nothing surprising that he should be opposed to this Bill, because I think he has been opposed pretty well to nearly every Bill introduced during the present session. It is quite evident that, so far as the opinions of that honourable gentleman are concerned, the times are completely out of joint,—everything is going wrong, particularly the Government policy. The colony itself is going wrong, and we have the assurance of the honourable gentleman and of those behind him that the country is going very rapidly to ruin, notwithstanding the prosperous condition of the frozen-meat business.

Mr. BUCHANAN.—“Prosperous condition”?

Mr. HOGG.—notwithstanding the prosperous condition of the frozen-meat business. Well, it is rather singular to hear that honourable gentleman defend the Railway Commissioners as he has been doing lately, considering the fact that within the last week or two he accompanied me on a deputation to the Premier first, and to the Railway Commissioners afterwards—a deputation of gentlemen whom he knew very well—sawmillers, partly from his own district and partly from the district I represent—with a very grievous complaint, one of long standing, against these very Railway Commissioners. I refer to the deputation that waited, first, on the Premier to ask his good services in endeavouring to get the Commissioners to reduce the freight on timber, and to do away with some very serious anomalies, such as have been referred to by the Premier this afternoon in introducing the Bill; and I am glad to say that, through, I believe, the kind offices of the Premier in endeavouring to prevail upon the Commissioners to adopt a tariff of a really-reasonable and rational character, the reduction we sought for has been brought about; but it has only been brought about as the result of a long-continued and a large amount of pressure. Now, it is very singular, if the management of these Railway Commissioners was as good as the honourable gentleman alleges it has been in the past, that these reductions should not have been carried out until the sawmillers have been nearly driven out of the market altogether. These men assured me that their mills in some cases were on half-time, and that in other cases, in the midst of the bush, their mills were idle,—that they were absolutely unable to bring down their timber to Wellington at a profitable rate, and that the trade had almost disappeared. That was the nature of the pressure that induced the Commissioners ultimately to alter the tariff, and to make it of a somewhat

reasonable character. The honourable member, I think, accused the Premier of stating that a very large amount of money had been spent by the Railway Commissioners in advertising, and that this money had been used in a corrupt manner, because the advertisements had been given to a certain number of papers which he designated as of “the right colour.” I have no doubt the Premier will reply for himself; but, as far as I was able to understand the remarks made by the Premier on this subject, he accused the Railway Commissioners of no partiality whatever, but he accused them of what he considered to be gross extravagance. I am not aware, and I do not think any one besides the honourable member for Wairarapa will say for a moment, that the Premier has gone out of his way to accuse the Commissioners of anything in the shape of unfairness or want of impartiality with regard to advertising. I need not refer to the rest of the arguments that have been brought forward by the honourable gentleman. He defends the Railway Commissioners for allowing some of their officers to obtain extended leave of absence on full pay, and he alleges as one good reason for this that these officers were able to obtain good ideas of railway management in other places; but I think it is very hard, in that case, that railway officers should be sent to another part of the world for the purpose of furthering their education at the expense of the colony. What it seems to me would be a much more reasonable method of introducing new ideas would be to introduce occasionally new blood from those countries where railway management is perhaps a little better understood than it is in New Zealand. But I defend this Bill, and I am going to support it, because I consider it recognises one broad and undeniable fact, and that is, that the railways are the property of the people of New Zealand. They are about the most valuable piece of property that the people possess, and, being the property of the people of the country, I maintain that the railways should never have been taken from the control of the people. They were handed over to a Board of Commissioners, by whom? By a previous Government? With the consent of the people? Not for a moment. The question was never brought plainly before the electors. They had no opportunity of giving their approval or disapproval. The fact is that, had the people of New Zealand been made aware that these railways were likely to be handed over to the control of three gentlemen, and particularly to one of the Commissioners, there would have been a howl throughout the length and breadth of the colony. That is a fact that cannot be disputed, and the best proof that the action of that Government was condemned is the fact that four years ago the Government that handed the control of the railways over to an irresponsible Board was tried, condemned, and signally executed. The Government, in establishing the Commissioners, established what can only be designated a railway despotism, and I should like to ask whether a

despotism of any kind is conducive to good management, to purity, to freedom from corruption. I maintain this, Sir: that an irresponsible Board signifies an abuse of power; that if there is anything that is likely to produce mismanagement, gross extravagance, and even corruption it is the erection of a tribunal of this character; because we know very well the influence which a Board of this character can use if it thinks proper, and we know very well the influence which can be brought to bear against a Board of this nature. Have we not between four and five thousand men employed on these railways—men who dare not offend these Railway Commissioners because their living, their bread-and-butter, hope of advancement, and promotion in the profession they have chosen depend upon the will of these Commissioners? There is no question about it. The position of these men was very well exhibited during the strike that took place a few years ago, and it is a singular thing that members of our chambers of commerce, and some of our big farmers, and other gentlemen, who have since been extolling the Commissioners, were doing nothing else but running the Commissioners down before the strike occurred. On the occasion of that strike the Commissioners used some of their men in a way that I hope no employers will ever use their men again. Then, again, I admit, the Commissioners are not in a very good position, because when a general election comes round it is necessary they should propitiate their men in order to get their sympathy and assistance, and command their support. At a time of emergency they must see that their men are well treated; they must pay them well; they may have to pay them inordinately; they may have to advance them where they do not deserve it. This is antagonistic to the interests of the service; it may involve the demoralisation of the staff; and it is detrimental to the interests of the country. Then, we have heard a good deal about political control. Nearly all the gentlemen whose names figure in the pamphlet referred to by the honourable member for Wairarapa are against political control of the railways. They say it is essential to successful management that we should have non-political control. Now, Sir, what is "non-political control"? Can a single example of that kind of control be cited in this colony? Every man in this colony is a politician, whether he be a Railway Commissioner or not. It is a manifest absurdity: you have no such thing as non-political control in the country. The Railway Board is as much a political body as are those who are assembled within the walls of this chamber. No one accuses the Railway Commissioners of dishonesty. I believe they are doing their best. I believe the Board we had a few years ago did their very best; and, as far as their honesty is concerned, no one, that I am aware of, has impeached it. But, although they acted according to their lights, I believe we could have had much better administration, and the lines would have been managed in a way far more

conducive to the interests of New Zealand, to the development of its industries, and to the prosperity of its population if the railways had been placed in the hands of the people's representatives and under a Minister of the Crown, instead of being handed over to an irresponsible body—a despotism. Then, again, the necessity for Commissioners is insisted upon because, if the railways are placed in the hands of the Government of the day or of a Minister of the Crown, he will be unable to resist the pressure from all directions. It is alleged that the farmers will want to get their wool and grain carried at lower rates than now. Well, it is natural they should. I do not for a moment see why the farmers should not endeavour to get their wool, grain, and other produce carried at a lower rate; and I say it is the duty of the Government of a country to help the farmers, because by helping the farmers they are helping the whole of the population. Then, that argument goes for nothing. As regards pressure, it is the duty of the Government of the country to withstand pressure, and, in the interests of the country, to do not what is right for one body, individual, or party, but what it considers right for the whole community. But, Sir, we have had most extraordinary arguments brought forward in favour of this system of management by Commissioners. Some time ago I think a circular was sent to a good many of the leading men of New Zealand, including members of this House and of another Chamber, asking their opinions. I observed that a great majority of those opinions were in favour of the Railway Commissioners. One of those consulted, who occupies the position of a legislator in New Zealand, suggested that we should have a Committee of Legislative Councillors, who would work in conjunction or harmony with the Commissioners and direct them what to do. Another declared that before 1887, when the Railways Bill was passed, and this vast property handed over to the Commissioners, the railways were a refuge for incapables. Well, that honourable gentleman—I will not mention his name, but he is pretty well known to a good many members of this House—had no occasion to travel so far in search of incapables; he had no occasion to look so far away as the railways; he might have looked to an establishment closer at hand which it is not necessary for me to name. It has been argued that the railways should not be vested in Ministers because Ministers are not chosen nowadays for their administrative ability, but because of their talking-power. Then, we had the honourable member for Hawke's Bay telling us that the railways should not be intrusted to a Minister of the Crown because continuity is required. Now, the plain fact of the matter is that a great many people run away with the idea that the railways should not be under any man's control unless he happens to be an expert, trained in the service, and brought up to the business from his infancy. Why, who are the managers of railways where they are properly

Mr. Hogg

managed? Who are the men who control and direct those railways? Are they engineers? Are they men who have been brought up to this particular business? Who are the directors who manage the railways in Great Britain and America? Financiers, good men of business: that is all they are, and they make the best directors that can be found. But we hear honourable members referring to such persons as not fit individuals to be intrusted with the direction and control of railways. I maintain

12.30. there is the same difference between a director or controller who has the general charge of the policy under which a railway system is worked and those who have the actual management of the railway mechanism as there is between the captain of a ship and the seamen. What position would a vessel be in if the captain were to leave the seamen to navigate her on the high seas? The vessel would be allowed to drift; and that is the position our railways have been in during the last two years. I do not deny that we have had very competent men, doing their utmost to manage these railways properly and make them pay, and endeavouring also to meet the serious requirements of the population. But those men have had far too much responsibility heaped upon their shoulders. They have been asked to take charge of property that has cost the colony over fifteen millions—a property that, properly worked and controlled, can be made beneficial to every industry in New Zealand, to assist the farmer and grazier, and to develop our coal-mines. I say that this vast machinery ought not to be removed from the control of the people of the colony—because that is really what it means—and placed in the hands of three men, no matter how well trained they may have been for the occupation they follow. These men have been crushed beneath the weight of responsibility; they have not been masters of the situation, and they have been afraid to act as they might have done in the interests of the colony. They have been afraid of having to face the possibility of loss, and the result is that there has been a want of enterprise. That, in my opinion, is one great reason why freights have been maintained in the way they have been, and why no proper effort has been made, through the agency of the State railways, to develop the splendid resources we know New Zealand is rich in. I merely wish to say, before I sit down, that it would be considered a most preposterous thing in this or any other country if the main roads or highways were handed over to an irresponsible Board to do what they thought proper with. The railways are the main highways of trade and commerce, and they should therefore be managed by members of this House and by a Minister of the Crown on behalf of the whole people; and they should never have been allowed to drift into the hands of an irresponsible body like the Railway Commissioners.

Mr. MITCHELSON moved the adjournment of the debate.

Debate adjourned.

BANK OF NEW ZEALAND AND COLONIAL BANK.

Captain RUSSELL.—I have been speaking to the chairman of directors of the Colonial Bank, and I have his assurance that I have been misinformed as to any advance having been made by the Bank of New Zealand to the Colonial Bank, and also that there have been no transactions of a similar nature between them; nor has the Colonial Bank been under any obligation whatsoever to the Bank of New Zealand. I wish to make that statement, as I said this afternoon that I had heard such had been the case. I have every assurance from the chairman that such is not the case, and I have every reason to believe that it is true.

Mr. LARNACH.—I am sorry that my honourable friend was not sufficiently candid to say that it was not the case that, as I am informed he did say, the Colonial Bank had had £100,000 advanced to it from the Bank of New Zealand. The fact is that the Colonial Bank has had no advances whatever of any kind from that bank, and I am in a position to say that the Colonial Bank does not owe one farthing either to the Bank of New Zealand or to any other bank in the colony. I am sorry that these *ad captandum vulgus* statements are made so recklessly in this House, to the damage of respectable financial institutions.

Mr. SPEAKER.—I think the honourable gentleman will see the necessity of not replying to the honourable member's speech, seeing that a certain statement in it has been explained.

Mr. LARNACH.—Then, Sir, I wish to confirm what has been said—that there was not the slightest foundation of truth in the statement made in various directions by members on that side of the House as to the Colonial Bank. The fact is that the relations between the two banks—the Colonial and New Zealand—have been such that such a thing could not have occurred: and the Colonial Bank is not indebted to any banking institution in any part of the world.

Mr. SEDDON.—I desire to add to what has been said, that I am pleased that the honourable member for Hawke's Bay has taken the step he has taken to set this matter right. It shows how careful members ought to be, in dealing with financial institutions, before making statements of the kind, to make every inquiry as to whether or not those statements are correct; because since the former statement was made a number of newspapers have been printed and circulated, but this contradiction cannot appear to-night in those papers, and in the meantime the position of the institutions, which we all wish well to in this colony, and which we are desirous to promote as far as we can, is affected. I would ask honourable members, when speaking of this matter, to be as careful as they possibly can be. Parliament has done well in passing the banking legislation, and has received great credit throughout the colony and the world over for the good work it did, when financial disaster threatened the chief bank of the colony; but I only refer to the matter now, not with a desire

to create any feeling, but to ask honourable members to be careful in future in regard to our institutions.

The House adjourned at twenty minutes to one o'clock a.m.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.

Monday, 10th September, 1894.

First Readings—Second Reading—Town Districts Bill—Native Rights Bill—Count-out.

Mr. SPEAKER took the chair at half-past seven o'clock.

PRAYERS.

FIRST READINGS.

Government Advances to Settlers Bill, Foreign Insurance Companies' Deposits Bill, Hastings Borough Loan Validation and Empowering Bill, Stamp Bill.

SECOND READING.

Coroners' Inquests Bill.

TOWN DISTRICTS BILL.

Mr. G. HUTCHISON, in moving the second reading of the Town Districts Bill, said the effect of this Bill was to revive the Town District Acts of 1881 and 1883, which were repealed by the Municipal Corporations Act of 1886. There were many places known as town districts which had the administration of their own affairs, but there had been none constituted since 1886. Since then numerous communities had grown up not large or important enough to become Municipal Corporations, or boroughs, but large enough to control their own affairs apart from the County Councils, which in the meantime had control over these embryo towns. This Bill went a little further than to revive the old state of things, because it proposed amendments which would apply to town districts already created, and to such as might in future spring into existence; the amendments being intended to give town districts control over all county roads lying within the limits of the town districts. At present the County Councils had control of the main roads, which generally meant the main streets of the townships. This Bill was to give the townships power over all streets within their boundaries. The Bill also provided that the ratepayers of town districts should have no voice in County Council matters. It was found under the existing law that the ratepayers in town districts largely interfered with what were considered to be the rights to representation by country settlers. If this Bill passed, then for the future the ratepayers in town districts would be confined in their votes to the affairs of the town. There was an oversight in this Bill which he desired to supply, so as to take away the right of the County Council to levy rates within town districts, so that, after the passing of this Bill, town districts, whether existing or to be constituted in future, would be in themselves embryo

Mr. Seddon

municipalities. They were not large enough to come under the Municipal Corporations Act yet, but were large enough to be desirous of standing by themselves. He might illustrate the position of a community which was unable to form itself into a town district by referring to Eltham,—a centre of population in the district which he had the honour to represent,—and in that connection he should desire to present a petition from sixty householders of Eltham, praying that this Bill should pass. Eltham was a centre of population which had arisen at the cross-roads of settlement. It had all the elements of prosperity, and was already pulsating with the desire for local administration, but at present was not large enough to become a municipality. He therefore begged to move the second reading of the Bill.

Mr. MILLS, while admitting that the law was at present unsatisfactory, did not think the Bill went far enough; or otherwise it went too far. For instance, in the electorate which he represented the district road passed through the Pelorus Road Board District and Havelock. And in some of those town districts there might be expensive bridges to maintain. If they were to be maintained from rates collected from these town districts alone, it would place the ratepayers in a very unfair position. Formerly, under the Crown Lands Rating Act a large sum was paid to the Road Boards, and these rates assisted them materially in maintaining the roads through town districts. He did not think it advisable to pass this Bill unless a part of the Crown rates promised by new legislation were paid in to the body that managed the affairs of the town district. Then, there was another point they had to study, and that was that in town districts they might erect toll-gates. That would be a very serious consideration for the outlying districts. Then, there was a very material alteration in this Bill, because at the present time the ratepayers of a town district could exercise the privilege of having five votes. They could also vote in any other subdivision of a road district in which they had property. It seemed to him that it would be unfair to give the ratepayers in a town district a greater privilege in the way of voting than the ratepayers who lived in a county. Therefore this Bill did not go far enough. They would require an amendment of the Road Boards Act before they dealt with this matter, in fairness to all concerned. The latter portion of clause 2 he certainly objected to, but at the same time it was an objection to raise in Committee, and he would not detain the House to explain his other reasons for opposing the measure as it now stood.

Mr. SEDDON said it appeared to him that members were not giving sufficient attention to the Bill now before them. He looked upon this as one of the dangerous class of measures introduced this session; and that was saying a great deal. This meant simply the bringing into existence of a number of local bodies which the Legislature some years ago said were unnecessary, and were injurious to the country. There was no limit here whatever. A mere hand-

ful of people—a mere township of two or three stores, a couple of hotels, in all fifty residents—could form themselves into a town district. The revenue-producing portion of the population would secure themselves as against the county. They took absolute powers of local self-government, but left miles and miles of roads entirely to the County Councils to maintain and repair. His honourable friend said he was going to make some alteration in Committee, and told the House what he was going to do. But he (Mr. Seddon) desired to point out the danger with which they would be surrounded if this Bill passed. He believed the trend of public opinion in the colony was that they had too many local bodies and too much local government. If that was the trend of public opinion, this was a measure which would increase to a very dangerous extent the number of local bodies in the colony. The general consensus of opinion was that they should increase the number of persons who could form themselves into a municipality, that they should increase the value of the properties, and so prevent, as far as possible, any more local bodies from springing into existence. The Government had promised the House—and they were bound to that—next session to introduce a Bill dealing with this important question of local self-government; and they were going to do so. In the face of that, it was not wise, he thought, to pass the measure that was now under consideration. If these knots of people formed themselves into townships for the sake of revenue, some people might not be sufficiently conscientious and might swallow their convictions and maintain publichouses on account of the revenue. He simply pointed out this danger which would meet them if they passed this measure. He might say since they had abolished the town districts local government had gone on much better than it previously did. He knew the place the honourable gentleman referred to, and he knew there were townships like Eltham which had for some time suffered at the hands of County Councils. But that was a defect in their county legislation—it did not prove the necessity for the town districts. There ought to be an amendment of their county law, where streets were to be maintained. There should be provision made which would force County Councils to deal with the townships with justice. It was the injustice which these little townships had suffered at the hands of the County Councils which had caused the honourable gentleman to move in this direction; but in his opinion the cure would be worse than the disease, and it would be a great disadvantage to counties and road districts to let this Bill pass. It was an unwise measure to pass. He had considered it his duty to point this out to honourable members, and he trusted that if they granted the second reading of the Bill it would not be proceeded with further this session. He might say that he deemed that the honourable gentleman in moving the second reading of the Bill was giving effect to the wishes of his constituents; and he knew that there were a large number of townships in

various parts of the colony which had been injudiciously treated by the County Councils; and the county laws were defective in that respect. Hence the people desired to keep pace with their neighbours—perhaps a borough near them, or any townships that had been formed into boroughs—and they sought to have this Bill passed as a measure of self-protection. At the same time, this was a dangerous measure; and, as legislation dealing with local self-government would be brought down next session, it was a question whether honourable members would now concur with the second reading of this Bill.

8.0. Mr. G. W. RUSSELL was sorry on this occasion to have to differ altogether from the Premier with regard to the position of these districts. He might say that in the electorate which he had the honour to represent there were several important suburbs and districts which were hardly sufficiently advanced yet to form municipalities, but the people in which were very desirous that such a measure as this should be provided. He was very much surprised to hear the Premier state that this proposal, if given effect to, would be the means of opening the door to the formation of an unlimited number of local bodies. If he understood the honourable gentleman aright, he had said that if there were two publichouses and a store in any particular place the people who owned these could form themselves into a Town District Board.

Mr. SEDDON said No; the honourable gentleman was mistaken. He knew the population that was required.

Mr. G. W. RUSSELL distinctly understood the Premier to say that if this Bill were given effect to there would be absolutely no limit to the number of local bodies that could be created under it. Under "The Town Districts Act, 1881," which, he thought, was one of the most carefully-prepared and well-thought-out measures relating to local self-government that had ever been passed in this colony, and in regard to the working of which he had had experience in various parts of New Zealand, there had to be fifty householders before they could apply for incorporation; and then there was a prescribed area for the district: "No such locality shall exceed two square miles in area, and no one point in such area shall be distant more than four miles from any other point therein, except in the case of military townships." And then it went on,—

"In every such locality not less than two-thirds of the number of the resident householders shall concur in any such petition, and each signature to such petition shall be verified by the attestation of some respectable witness."

Now, he thought, where they had got small villages where there was a population of, say, fifty or more resident householders, it was very desirable that those people should be able to have a form of local government which would suit themselves. In his own district there was an important village called Belfast, which surrounded the freezing-works there, and which

contained a population of from a hundred to a hundred and fifty resident householders; but the only form of government which was provided for them was the Road Board system. It was only a section of a large and wealthy Road Board district, and the people could not get the same attention paid to their local wants which they would secure under a Town Board; and yet they were not sufficiently advanced to form themselves into a municipality. There was another township in his electorate, called Papanui, the people of which were in a somewhat similar position in connection with another Road Board; and, so far as these two places were concerned, they were not large enough for the more ambitious form of local government which was provided by the Municipal Corporations Act, but at the same time they were far in advance of the sparsely-populated districts which were naturally considered to be the proper places for the road-district form of government. He would like to point out to the Premier, in connection with the Road Boards, that these bodies had no power to make by-laws, while the County Councils could make by-laws. If they took, for instance, the large County of Selwyn, it was impossible that it could make by-laws that would be applicable to the whole of the county; while in districts like the Riccarton and Avon Road Districts, the Boards being unable to make by-laws, the people suffered from many grievances which could be remedied if they had the form of local government which was provided for in the Bill now under consideration. Although the Premier promised that next year a comprehensive measure relating to local government would be brought in, he (Mr. G. W. Russell) thought it would be a good thing if the House were to pass this Bill during the present session. Throughout the whole session he had been watching for this Bill, and he was glad to have the opportunity of speaking in favour of it. He hoped it would pass into law.

Mr. THOMPSON was very sorry to hear the few remarks that had come from the Premier with regard to this Bill, because he knew that, at this period of the session, if the Premier opposed the Bill the honourable member who moved the second reading might just as well drop it. He hoped the honourable gentleman would see fit to change his mind and favour the Bill going through. He had two town districts in his electoral district, and he could assure the House that it was a very useful form of local government. The position which these small townships found themselves in was that the County Council would not give assistance to them for drainage or sanitary arrangements, or anything of that kind. He would point out to the Premier that it was far better to have these town districts than to have weakly boroughs. If they threw obstacles in the way of establishing town districts the result would be that the areas which wished for this form of local government would form themselves into weakly boroughs, which would be a great mistake. He knew the people were very anxious to have

Mr. G. W. Russell

extended powers of local government in this direction. They did not like to be obliged to resort to the more expensive system of forming municipalities. The town districts could be worked quite as cheaply as the ordinary Road Boards, and they could perform all the duties and functions of municipalities, and, as these smaller towns were springing up all over the country, he thought it was absolutely necessary to grant these powers. So far as he knew, there was no friction between the town districts and the counties or the Road Boards where town districts existed. If there was friction in any case it was only in connection with drainage and sanitary arrangements, and, unless something in this direction were provided, these small districts would become hotbeds of fever. He trusted the Premier would allow the Bill to pass.

Mr. MCGOWAN hoped that before the Bill was allowed to pass honourable members who had County Councils in their districts would examine the measure closely, because he had no doubt it would simply be the destruction of the counties as they now existed. There were very few counties which had not one or two small townships situated within their bounds, and the government of the townships and the road-management were very well looked after by the counties. The Bill would enable a number of small local bodies to be established—in fact, a fresh form of local government—and would thereby multiply the forms of government already in existence. Perhaps there would be no objection to this provided it were brought down in connection with some rearrangement of the county system, but as it was now proposed it really constituted a great danger to the present counties. Let them take as an example the instance referred to by the honourable member for Riccarton—that of Belfast, where there were freezing-works established, and a township was growing up around them. If this district were formed into a town district the result would be that the rest of the county in which it was situated would have to pay the whole of the expense connected with the maintenance of the roads, which were cut up by the heavy traffic passing to and from the freezing-works; and the town district, which was really responsible for the traffic that was causing the destruction of the roads, would pay hardly anything towards their construction and maintenance. He thought the instance which the honourable gentleman gave was a fatal one for the argument which he used. He had no doubt that if honourable members fairly considered the case they would see that there was no necessity for this particular measure.

Sir R. STOUT quite agreed with the honourable member for the Thames. He thought the adoption of this measure would tend to weaken our system of county government.

An Hon. MEMBER said it could not be any weaker than it was.

Sir R. STOUT thought it could be weakened considerably. If this Town Districts Bill were brought into operation they would have every village in a county forming itself into a town

district, and the counties would be left to deal merely with the outlying districts. That would be unfair, because most of the rating-power was contained in the town districts, and the people there could only have one rate imposed upon them. He only regretted that the Premier did not say that this Bill ought to be stopped at the second reading, instead of putting them to the trouble of going into Committee on a measure like it. He would vote against the second reading. They ought to have one Municipal Bill dealing with counties, municipalities, and Road Board districts, and in the case of settled districts they could give the County Councils or the Road Boards power under such a measure to deal with sanitary questions. That was all that was necessary. He did not see why this Bill should not be postponed until next session, so that the County Councils or the Road Boards might be charged with the powers he had indicated.

Mr. STEVENS said it was his intention to give this Bill his most hearty support, because he had communications from the local bodies within his own electorate, and outside it as well, requesting him to support such a measure. He could give the House instances of two considerable towns in his electorate which were under the control of the County Council, and he felt it to be a great grievance that they were not allowed to regulate their own local affairs. In the two places to which he referred—Ohingaiti and Hunterville—there were many hundreds of people resident, and he thought it was plainly unjust and unfair that thousands of people were compelled to wallow in mud during the winter because the County Councils were either indifferent or unwilling to attend to their immediate wants. They had no means of levying rates to make footpaths and attend to the necessary sanitary arrangements. And, although he regretted that a much more comprehensive scheme of local self-government than this was not brought down, he could not help thinking it would be a manifest injustice to allow the state of things he had alluded to to go on any longer in the hope of some legislation being introduced at some future time to cure the evil. He thought very little harm would be done if this measure were passed into law, and, if it were passed now, and a new and more comprehensive measure were to be subsequently introduced, this measure could be easily repealed then, together with those portions of the Counties Act which it might be necessary to repeal. At any rate, he thought he would not be doing his duty to his constituents if he left them in the position in which many of them were now placed in regard to local government. For these reasons, he would give the Bill his hearty support.

Major HARRIS said it was his intention to support the Bill, and he hoped the honourable member who was in charge of it would push it as far as he possibly could. It was well known that for years past they had been promised a better system of local self-government, and yet they were now as near to the realisation of that promise as they were several years

ago. The Premier had promised that such a measure would be brought forward next year, and he had no doubt the Premier meant to keep his word; but he did not think it would be a measure of this kind that would be brought forward. There would be other matters that would be more thought of brought forward, and it would have to take its chance. In the district which he represented there was no County Council; the Road Boards controlled all the roads in the district. The people whose lands formed a portion of one of the Road Board districts wished to form a town district, and there was no objection to it, and under this Bill the portion wishing to be constituted a town district would have the necessary power for the purpose. He did not think the Premier would make this a Government question next session, and therefore he hoped the honourable member for Patea would push his Bill as far as he possibly could.

Mr. R. MCKENZIE said it was his intention to oppose this Bill, because he thought there were too many local bodies in the colony already. In some country districts the County Councils and Road Boards would have a difficulty in carrying on their work if town districts were taken from them and formed into separate local bodies. He thought this Bill might well stand over till next year, when the Government should deal with the whole question of local government.

Mr. G. HUTCHISON was not usually surprised at anything the Premier might state, but he was, he confessed, rather surprised to hear the honourable gentleman designate this Bill as one of the most dangerous measures which had been introduced this session. Probably the honourable member meant that as a joke, although, as he went on, he gave one the impression that he considered this was a revolutionary measure. He (Mr. Hutchison) might remind the House that this Bill only revived a right of local government which existed up till 1886, and that there were now scores of town districts administering their own affairs throughout the colony. The Bill had two aims. The first was that of removing grievances which existed in regard to existing town districts,—and these grievances were very considerable; the other object aimed at was the setting-up of local government in centres which had grown in importance since 1886. He was rather surprised at the line taken by the honourable member for the Thames in ridiculing the argument of the honourable member for Riccarton. In reference to the case of Belfast, the honourable member for the Thames said that was an argument against the Bill, inasmuch as, if Belfast were cut out of the county, the county would not derive any benefit from the freezing-works, although the roads of the county would be cut up by traffic to and from these works. Surely his honourable friend would not suppose that the settlers in that district derived no benefit from the establishment of those works. He had been urged to push on the Bill as far as it was possible, but he could not get it any further than the

second reading, for it would not be in order, probably, to ask the House to go into Committee that night on the Bill. The subsequent stages were entirely in the hands of the Premier. If the Premier would not take up the Bill, the measure must be dropped for this session, but he hoped the House would affirm the principle by passing the second reading. If that were done they would thus emphasize the necessity for a measure dealing with local government, and he thought the Premier must be held to have pledged himself to introduce such a measure next session.

Bill read a second time.

NATIVE RIGHTS BILL.

Mr. HEKE, in moving the second reading of this Bill, said he would endeavour to put before the House the state of the Native mind at the present time in respect to the powers referred to in the Bill. He would also give the House his assurance that the Native mind had been occupied, with reference to this question, for several years past, and, as far as he understood it, the interest in it had been growing every year. He might tell the House that the Natives themselves gave reasons why they thought it advisable to pass this measure. In the first instance, they contended that the Natives themselves had been harassed by laws passed by that House: in fact, he thought it was beyond doubt that the Natives had suffered materially under Acts passed dealing with the administration of their lands and other property. The preamble of the Bill set that forth. He would also endeavour to put before the House other grounds on which the Natives themselves had good reason to complain of certain laws which had been passed. One of those grounds was an agreement which was entered into between the representative of the British Government and the Native chiefs of New Zealand. With the indulgence of the House, he would read that document. He thought it was only right that he should read these different documents, because there were many new members of the House who had no knowledge at all of Native matters in past years. The first document was an agreement styled the "Declaration of Independence," made between the Native chiefs of New Zealand—at least, a certain number of them—and the representative of the British Government:—

"1. We, the hereditary chiefs and heads of the tribes of the Northern parts of New Zealand, being assembled at Waitangi, in the Bay of Islands, on this 28th day of October, 1835, declare the Independence of our country, which is hereby constituted and declared to be an Independent State, under the designation of The United Tribes of New Zealand.

"2. All sovereign power and authority within the territories of the United Tribes of New Zealand is hereby declared to reside entirely and exclusively in the hereditary chiefs and heads of tribes in their collective capacity, who also declare that they will not permit any legislative authority separate from themselves in

their collective capacity to exist, nor any function of government to be exercised, within the said territories, unless by persons appointed by them, and acting under the authority of laws regularly enacted by them in Congress assembled.

"3. The hereditary chiefs and heads of tribes agree to meet in Congress at Waitangi in the autumn of each year, for the purpose of framing laws for the dispensation of justice, the preservation of peace and good order, and the regulation of trade; and they cordially invite the Southern tribes to lay aside their private animosities, and to consult the safety and welfare of our common country, by joining the Confederation of the United Tribes.

"4. They also agree to send a copy of this Declaration to His Majesty the King of England, to thank him for his acknowledgment of their flag; and in return for the friendship and protection they have shown, and are prepared to show, to such of his subjects as have settled in their country, or resorted to its shores for the purposes of trade, they entreat that he will continue to be the parent of their infant State, and that he will become its Protector from all attempts upon its independence."

In many instances chiefs came to Wellington to interview different Ministers in reference to this matter. They had also petitioned the House year after year in reference to the same subject, but without getting any satisfaction. When he said "satisfaction," he meant that the Natives were not able to get the opinion of Parliament on the matter they asked for. The feeling had grown greater and greater in the Native mind that it was their duty, through one of their representatives, to have the matter placed before the House, so that they might know positively whether the Parliament would accede to them this right or not; and for the matter to be placed in the records of the House. The question might be raised, Why? The Natives contended that they had not had the opportunity of having this matter placed before the House fairly, so as to obtain the sense of the House, and to get the expression of opinion from every individual member of the House in respect to their wish. He had endeavoured, on behalf of the Natives, to have their wish put into the form of the Bill now before the House, and to get the expression of every individual member, or of all those who might wish to express their opinion upon it. It was immaterial to him how honourable members might express themselves, and he was not going to appeal to any honourable member for any support, but he would leave that to their good sense. Any opinion expressed would be read with great interest by the Natives, and would have a tendency to satisfy the Native mind that they had had a hearing and an expression of opinion on their wish, which they have been struggling to obtain for years past. He could say, with the knowledge he had received from them by letters, that their only wish was, if the House did not see their way clear to give them the powers contained in the Bill, that the

Mr. G. Hutchison

House should express an opinion on the measure itself; and also, if honourable members thought the power asked for was too much, they could express their opinion upon it. He had several petitions from all over the North Island, and from a portion of the South Island, the signatures to which numbered 6,525. He had not received the opinions of the Natives about Waikato in respect to this matter, but he could refer to other documents written to the late Mr. Ballance by his friend—now dead—Tawhiao, which he would have the pleasure of reading:—

“*Whatiwhatihoē*, 17th May, 1886.

“To the Minister for Native Affairs—that is, to all the Government: Greeting to you all.

“FRIEND MR. BALLANCE,—This is a Bill of mine that I lay before you, concerning the grievances and troubles which have affected me and my Maori people subsequent to the assurances made by the Queen, in the Treaty of Waitangi, to my ancestors and my father, in the year 1840, down to the passing of the Constitution Act in 1852, clause 71.

“I continue to look to these assurances. To my mind they appear very clear, because of the friendly regard shown by my father to the Europeans.

“The first proof of this is, that it was my father, Potatau himself, who settled the Europeans at Waitemata, Auckland, out of his love for them. He it was who said decidedly that the Europeans should be our parents, and he and Governor Hobson went together into the heart of Waikato, reaching as far as Kawhia. Well, then, the Maoris befriended the Europeans, and then and there continued to invite them [to come].

“Second proof.—At the Treaty of Maraetai his words went forth to the chiefs of Waikato that they should continue to show love and good-will to the Europeans.

“Third proof.—When evil broke out at the North with Ngapuhi my father did not countenance Hone Heke's action. Hone Heke proposed that the flagstaff at Takapuna should be cut down, whereupon Potatau said it would not be right for any person to unwarrantably come and trample on the authority of another, and Potatau steadfastly supported the Europeans at that period.

“Fourth proof.—When hostilities commenced at Waitara, in 1860, on the 13th of March, his word went forth to all the chiefs and people that they should henceforth after that adhere to the Gospel and to the law, no matter what happened; for the Gospel is not a treasure that can be purchased, but it is universal, and descended from the great God in heaven; therefore he said fighting should cease between the Europeans and the Maoris in New Zealand, and that all sins great and small should be dealt with according to the law.

“This was the last good action of my father before he departed from this world.

“And then, in 1863, fighting broke out at Waikato, which was a great disaster, and resulted in the loss of our lands. Notwith-

standing that there was very much evil in Waikato I steadfastly adhered to the injunctions of my father, and have done so to this day; wherefore we are now living apart in sadness of heart, and are considering by what means we can live in the same happy state as we formerly did, and which was assured to us by the Treaty of Waitangi; therefore we are seeking what can be done for us in the friendly feeling and love of one to another.

“I did not consider that I should agree to the liberal proposals of the Government concerning myself, for I was mindful of those people who had joined in the fighting whose lands were not taken, and who have become friendly to the Government.

“Thus, then, I will adhere to my former decision, and will not accept the tempting proposals of the Government to do me honour and give me property. However, I see that there are tribes who have agreed that the Europeans and the Maoris should cease to be apart. I, too, will consent that the institutions of the Government that cause trouble to the Maoris—namely, surveys and the Native Land Court—should be put an end to, and the many other things that create evil.

“I address you all: do you, all the members of the Government, consent to what I ask of you concerning my Bill for the establishment of a Council for all the chiefs of this Island, that you should consent to my having the administration, commencing at the place of the Departing of Spirits (North Cape), and from thence to the head of this Island (Cook Strait), you to support me and my word.

“I wish that Council to be formed to deal with all the troubles affecting the Maori people, that Council to be conducted by them, I to overlook matters in that Council, and you to support me in accordance with the assurances given by the Queen in the Treaty of Waitangi, and down to Governor Browne's time, who notified the Queen's word—viz., that ‘Her Majesty had instructed the Governors who preceded him, and she will instruct those who come after him, to maintain the stipulations of this Treaty inviolate, and to watch over the interests and promote the advancement of her subjects without distinction of race.’

“Therefore it is that I say, grant me that Council, and I will administer it; you can consider, and sanction, and give effect to it. If we together settle it, the Queen can confirm it in accordance with the 71st clause of the Constitution Act of 1852, which provides that it shall be lawful for Her Majesty, by any letters patent to be issued under the Great Seal of the United Kingdom, to constitute Maori Councils for the government of themselves.

“1. All the rights and lands confirmed by the Treaty of Waitangi to be placed under the administrative authority of that Council.

“2. The committees at present established to be placed under the administrative authority of that Council, to deal with matters in each district in this Island.

“3. That Council to give the Committees power to deal with their difficulties, land-claims,

disputes, and other troubles concerning themselves.

"4. The Council to meet once a year.

"5. The revenue for the use of the Council to be the taxes received by the Government from the Maori people. See the petition sent to England.

"6. I do this in this manner in order that these subjects may be clearly brought before the Government of the Queen, whether entertained by this Government or not, in accordance with those communications [literally, "words"] from England.

"7. Therefore I say, do you carefully look into and consider the bearing of all these words, and bring this matter to a definite conclusion.

"(Seal.)

"KING TAWHIAO."

Honourable members would remember that Tawhiao and other Native chiefs went to England for no other purpose than this. Hirini Taiwhanga went to England for the same purpose, but received no satisfaction. These Natives while in England were confronted by communications sent to the Secretary of State for the Colonies by the Government of New Zealand. And now the time had arrived when the Natives had thought it proper to have their wish placed before the House in the shape of a Bill. Another ground on which the Natives based their reasons for coming to the House and asking for these powers was in relation to the Treaty of Waitangi. This was a covenant entered into between Her Majesty and the Native chiefs of New Zealand, and he thought it was only fair to read it:—

"Her Majesty Victoria, Queen of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, regarding with Her Royal Favour the Native Chiefs and Tribes of New Zealand, and anxious to protect their just Rights and Property, and to secure to them the enjoyment of Peace and Good Order, has deemed it necessary, in consequence of the great number of Her Majesty's Subjects who have already settled in New Zealand, and the rapid extension of Emigration both from Europe and Australia which is still in progress, to constitute and appoint a functionary properly authorised to treat with the Aborigines of New Zealand for the recognition of Her Majesty's Sovereign authority over the whole or any part of those Islands. Her Majesty, therefore, being desirous to establish a settled form of Civil Government, with a view to avert the evil consequences which must result from the absence of the necessary Laws and Institutions alike to the Native population and to Her subjects, has been graciously pleased to empower and authorise me, William Hobson, a Captain in Her Majesty's Royal Navy, Consul and Lieutenant-Governor of such parts of New Zealand as may be, or hereafter shall be, ceded to Her Majesty, to invite the confederated and independent Chiefs of New Zealand to concur in the following Articles and Conditions:—

"Article the First.

"The Chiefs of the Confederation of the United Tribes of New Zealand, and the sepa-

Mr. Heke

rate and independent Chiefs who have not become members of the Confederation, cede to Her Majesty the Queen of England, absolutely and without reservation, all the rights and powers of Sovereignty which the said Confederation or Individual Chiefs respectively exercise or possess, or may be supposed to exercise or to possess, over their respective Territories as the sole Sovereigns thereof.

"Article the Second.

"Her Majesty the Queen of England confirms and guarantees to the Chiefs and Tribes of New Zealand, and to the respective families and individuals thereof, the full, exclusive, and undisturbed possession of their Lands and Estates, Forests, Fisheries, and other properties which they may collectively or individually possess, so long as it is their wish and desire to retain the same in their possession; but the Chiefs of the United Tribes and the Individual Chiefs yield to Her Majesty the exclusive right of Pre-emption over such lands as the proprietors thereof may be disposed to alienate, at such prices as may be agreed upon between the respective Proprietors and persons appointed by Her Majesty to treat with them in that behalf.

"Article the Third.

"In consideration thereof, Her Majesty the Queen of England extends to the Natives of New Zealand her Royal protection, and imparts to them all the Rights and Privileges of British subjects.

"W. HOBSON,

Lieutenant-Governor.

"Now, therefore, We, the Chiefs of the Confederation of the United Tribes of New Zealand, being assembled in Congress at Victoria, in Waitangi, and We, the Separate and Independent Chiefs of New Zealand, claiming authority over the Tribes and Territories which are specified after our respective names, having been made fully to understand the Provisions of the foregoing Treaty, accept and enter into the same in the full spirit and meaning thereof; in witness of which we have attached our signatures or marks at the places and the dates respectively specified.

"Done at Waitangi, this sixth day of February, in the year of Our Lord one thousand eight hundred and forty."

It might be as well for him to say that in this respect he could give the House the assurance that undoubtedly the Natives, when this matter was put before them in 1840, did not wish to sign such a document. He was given to understand by those old chiefs who were still alive, and were now in the Bay of Islands, who attended the meeting when the document was placed before them by Governor Hobson, that there was a great deal of wrangling before a great many of the chiefs would undertake to sign their names. No doubt those honourable members who had read the old records of those days would understand that in every instance the Natives expressed themselves to the effect that they would not wish to be harassed by

any other Power, or to have their own power trodden down by a foreign Power. He might tell the House this: that the consent of all the chiefs who attended at Waitangi, when the matter was put before them, was obtained by the action of Hone Heke. It was he who got all the Native chiefs present at that meeting to sign the document on his consenting to sign. He could give the House the assurance that the Natives, even up to the present day, were doubtful as to the right of the Parliament of New Zealand to pass laws contrary to that Treaty. Section 2 of that Treaty gave the Natives full right to the soil of New Zealand, and he might add that it was only natural for the Natives to suppose that they ought not to be harassed by any laws passed by the House in respect to their lands. In fact, the Natives, as far as he knew, were under the impression that their lands would not be disturbed in any shape or form. He would like to call the attention of members of the House to this fact: What had been the tendency of the legislation on Native matters? He said the tendency was to confiscate their lands; and he said further that the past legislation on Native matters had been disastrous to the Natives. The Natives had in many instances raised the question of the Treaty of Waitangi, and asked that the provisions of that Treaty be maintained by the different Governments of New Zealand, but without avail. It had always been told them by many Europeans outside of this House, and also by members representing the Government of the day, that the Treaty was nothing at all. What was the result? If honourable members would look back to the Journals of the House they would find that several petitions, signed by prominent chiefs of the Native race, were sent to England, making inquiries whether the Treaty of Waitangi was repealed as stated. The answer to a number of the petitioners was to the effect that this Treaty, signed in 1840, was as good now as it was then. He might remind the House that it was unfair to compare the Native mind with that of the European. The Natives had only come in contact with European civilisation fifty years ago, whereas on the other hand the Europeans had been in that state for hundreds of years. He had stated before in the House that the House, when treating with matters relative to the Natives, should treat the Native mind as such, and not as a European mind, as far as possible. There was no getting out of this: that the contention of the Natives was correct that every Act passed by the House from the year 1853 or 1854 up to the present day had been disastrous to the Native race. He would venture to say that under the operation of every Act passed by the House relative to the administration of Native lands there had been cases where the Natives have been put to a great amount of expense and endless litigation. That was not the fault of the Natives, and he maintained that that fault must lie either upon the Government of the day or upon the non-consideration given to the different mea-

sures that had been introduced into the House, and to the neglect to find out the best means of legislating when bringing forward any measure to enable the Government of the day to administer Native property. He would come to a conclusion by expressing to the House that there was no reason why the Natives should not have the sole right of enacting laws for themselves. There was not the slightest doubt that the intention of section 71 of the Constitution Act of 1852 was to give them that right. He would read it:—

“And whereas it may be expedient that the laws, customs, and usages of the Aboriginal or Native inhabitants of New Zealand, so far as they are not repugnant to the general principles of humanity, should for the present be maintained for the government of themselves in all their relations to and dealings with each other, and that particular districts should be set apart within which such laws, customs, or usages should be so observed:

“It shall be lawful for Her Majesty, by any Letters Patent to be issued under the Great Seal of the United Kingdom, from time to time to make provision for the purposes aforesaid, any repugnancy of any such Native laws, customs, or usages to the law of England, or to any law, statute, or usage in force in New Zealand, or in any part thereof, in anywise notwithstanding.”

The Natives contended that they had not had an opportunity of getting the rights set out in that section given them yet. Although he could fully understand that this House was not the proper place to which the Natives should apply for the powers set out in section 71, he thought it was only fair that any representation on the part of the Native race in favour of having their wishes embodied in a Bill and placed fairly before the House should receive every consideration from the members of the House. Therefore he would again tell honourable members that it was immaterial to him how members might express themselves on this measure, as he could give the House the assurance that in the Bill being placed before them, and in his appeal to honourable members to express their opinions upon its provisions, it would go, to a great extent, in the direction of settling the Native question, which, as already mentioned by several speakers during this session, had exercised the attention of the House for years past. When he said that this would be the means of settling the Native question he meant, should the House reject this Bill the Natives would have the satisfaction of knowing it. Of course they might make their last effort to go to England, and, should they fail there, he was satisfied that their common-sense would lead them to something practicable, although, at the same time, he thought the House should give them a trial. No doubt honourable members knew that there had been several differences in respect to dealings with Natives and their property. Well, he could only say that his reason for that was that the Native mind had been occupied on this question for years. People

had gone before the Natives, and had called public meetings, and had placed before them different views and different procedures; but the Natives had ignored them altogether, and, so far as he knew, what they wanted was a separate tribunal, to enable them to enact laws for themselves. He hoped honourable members who wished to express opinions on the Bill would do so; but he might say it was immaterial to him what tendency such expression might have. In conclusion, he would tell the House that last year the meeting of the Confederated Maori Assembly, which sat at Wai-patu, Hastings, passed a measure and petitioned the House to give effect to it; but those who were in charge of it did not know the procedure of the House, therefore they were not able to get an expression of opinion on it, but what they did get was an answer to a question put to the Government. In conclusion, he said the Natives knew quite well that an answer from the Government did not in any way mean the voice of Parliament.

Mr. CARROLL did not think the Bill did anything in the way of clearing up the Native question, and he did not think the speech he had just listened to showed any evidence whatever that the Bill would be of any great service to the Native people. There was nothing in the Bill itself but what was vague, indefinite, and outside of practical politics. It asked for a separate Constitution; and the question naturally arose, Was the House willing to grant it? Was the country in favour of it, and were the Native people themselves in favour of it? They had had several petitions, signed by about six thousand of the Native people, praying for a separate Constitution, but he maintained that the reason for those petitions had been a persistence of agitation throughout the colony against the existing laws. During the last two or three years it had been thought by the Maori people desirable in their own interest to have large meetings in different parts of the North Island. They had called those meetings Native Parliaments. He had been to almost every one of them, and had listened to the speeches delivered by their delegates from all parts of the colony touching Native matters, and he must say that at the close of those meetings he had never been able to arrive at any understanding of what they really required; they could not say themselves what they did require. They were led to believe that by making application to this Parliament they might be able to get a Constitution for themselves. It would be a kindness to free them from this delusion. The honourable gentleman had referred to the Treaty of Waitangi; and he (Mr. Carroll) thought that that Treaty was one of the most fortunate things that ever happened in this colony so far as the Native people were concerned. It was through that Treaty that the Natives' rights to their land were confirmed, and their lands guaranteed to them; under that Treaty they were made British subjects, and enjoyed the privileges and benefits of such. Up to this time there had been no attempt on

the part of the Legislature in any way to take away from them those rights. It was a matter for regret, according to the opinion held by a great many at the present time, that the Treaty of Waitangi had ever been departed from by the waiving of the pre-emptive right. If the Treaty of Waitangi had been kept intact the condition of the Natives might have been much better to-day. The waiving of the pre-emptive right led to the establishment of the Native Land Court, and to certain laws being enacted by the House which gave the Native owners the right of disposing of their property as they liked. From that date disasters had fallen on the Native race; and, if the honourable gentleman based his claim to a separate Constitution for the Native people on the Treaty of Waitangi, then, he said, they must have the Treaty of Waitangi in its entirety. They had been told that the Native Land Court was a source of great dissatisfaction to the Native people; but did the honourable gentleman propose in his Bill what should take its place? He had not told the House what the Native mind was as to the investigation of titles to their lands, and he presumed he meant that the work of the Native Land Court should hereafter be carried on by Native committees. If that were so, that experiment had been tried already. There was an Act passed in 1883 forming Native committees, but in actual experience that Act was found to be totally unworkable, and particularly so to the Natives themselves, who had not the slightest idea of conceiving any method or laying down any principle for investigating their titles; they had no practical system by which they could reduce the ownership of land to anything like a simple form. They met and discussed their land affairs, disputed amongst themselves,—and they were very prone to dispute amongst themselves,—and, finally, they broke up on the verge of hostilities. He said this from personal experience. And the idea that Native committees were capable of doing the work of the Native Land Court in the investigation of titles to Native land was an absurdity. He did not say that the Native Land Court was free from evil, but it was not so much the law as it was a matter of administration. In many cases they had incapable Judges, and Judges and staffs that were not in intelligent touch with Native customs and affairs; but the remedy was to dispense with those officials, and to get others who were efficient, and capable of performing the work. It was the duty of the Legislature and the country to insist that all Native lands in the colony should be clothed with a legal title. It would be better for the Natives themselves. As long as they had owned by Natives lands with undefined titles, so long would they have chaos. He would not only like every inch of land to be brought inside law, but he would, in the interests of every individual Native, so far as it was practicable, individualise most of the lands in the colony, and, if a Native owned any portion of land which could be considered sufficient for his own individual wants, he should be put in a position to utilise such land

Mr. Heke

and to settle upon it without interference from others: he would then become a useful member of the community. But so long as the individual titles remained undefined complications followed, and there was no end of disputes amongst themselves, which were not at all to their advantage. He did not say that he advocated individualisation in all cases, as there were certain blocks of land owned by hapus or tribes which from the character of the soil and their situation would not admit of individualisation, except at very heavy expense. In those cases a more simple method would have to be adopted of allowing owners to elect a number of themselves to manage for them. He would

9.0. advocate the corporate system in cases of that kind, where they should all join together, elect a corporate body, and allow that body to deal with their lands by lease or sale. These were the two methods he would put forth as what he thought essential and proper with regard to Native lands and their future administration. He held this: that wherever it was possible, wherever there was sufficient land of good quality for individuals to live upon, they should individualise as far as they could. Section 71 of the Constitution Act, referred to by his honourable friend, was totally impracticable. They could not attach any serious meaning to it at the present day. The time had passed when that might have been useful. What did it suggest? That the Native people in certain parts of the North Island should be allowed to govern themselves—should be afforded a system of government by which they could administer their own affairs as between Native and Native. It was very vague in its meaning; but, supposing it could be reduced to a practical form, it would mean that in certain parts of the Island, where there were no European settlers, and only Native interests were involved, they could establish a body—a Municipality, he supposed, or a County Council—to conduct their own affairs. But what would their own affairs be? It would probably be their lands. They would attempt, no doubt, to deal with other matters, such as the dog-tax and other things of that kind. It was thought at one time that some such provision might work, and he believed an Act was passed by Sir George Grey attempting to give effect to this, but it was found unworkable. None of the Natives interested appreciated the Act, or took steps to carry it into force. Subsequently, an Act was passed which admitted of special Maori representation in Parliament. It was thought that this was a more practical form for giving effect to the spirit of section 71 of the Constitution Act, whereby a means would be given to the Native people so that their representatives might come here and represent their affairs. They had had Maori representatives in the House year after year since the passing of that Act, and those representatives had done their best to represent the wishes and the wants of their people. All these years they had been legislating in the direction they considered good for the Native people. There

was, he admitted, no legislation ever passed that was altogether correct and satisfactory in every particular and detail, and no doubt the Acts passed affecting the Natives and the Native lands had not been altogether free from evil. But the tendency of the legislation and of the Legislature had been directed to ameliorating and civilising them. It had been in the direction of consummating the behest contained in the Treaty of Waitangi, to make the Natives British subjects in every particular. That had been the aim of all their legislation. But they could not make a Native fully a British subject, they could not put him in a position to enjoy thoroughly and completely the rights and privileges of a British subject, unless they took him by the hand and made him advance step by step; and the sooner they made him advance into line with his European brethren the better it would be for all. This was the advancement he would like to see. So long as the Maori people took up a negative position, and did not appreciate anything done by the Legislature, or anything done by the Europeans, or by those who represented them in Parliament, in the direction of advancement and progress, and of their sharing the full responsibility which they should share with their co-colonists, they fell behind. Anything that would retard or impede that which would make them alive to responsibility was not to the advantage of the Native people. It might be that it was hard to bear this change all of a sudden. The transition period of a race was always the most critical. That has been evidenced in the history of every race. They were trying to impress upon the Native mind many of the things the European had adopted. They were inclined to think that they were being unfairly dealt with—that we were imposing education and rates upon them, and dealing with them by drastic legislation. A Maori might feel all this; he might feel that he was being, as it were, violently severed from the old associations to which he had been accustomed, and which he revered and desired to conserve; but, notwithstanding all this, it was better that he should feel the momentary pain in order to enjoy the lasting benefit. His own opinion was that it would be a good thing to have the special Maori representation done away with. He thought that would be better for the Native race, and he would give his reasons for thinking so. In some districts, he believed, they were numerous enough to return one of themselves as their representative, and it would be the most intelligent who would be elected.

An Hon. MEMBER.—As against Europeans?

Mr. CARROLL.—Yes, in some districts; but in a majority of instances they would help in returning European representatives, who, he thought, would do more good to them than they could possibly do for themselves. He did not say this disrespectfully; he only regretted that he had to say it as a matter of conviction that was forced upon him; but the European had a better education in politics—he was more alive to all the useful features in our

present civilisation, and, that being so, he could better represent them, and could use his knowledge, intelligence, and experience for their benefit. If a European were returned to-morrow to represent a Native district, what would be his duty? His duty would be to help to administer the affairs of the country, to legislate for the advantage of the colony and of every one in it, Maori and European alike; and when he returned to his district it would be his duty to go and face his Native constituents, and not, as at the present time, only the European section of his constituency; he would go before the Native people, and explain to them the theory, the system, and principles of all our legislation; he would explain to them what was good for themselves, and every particular fact they were interested in. He held, upon these grounds, as a Native himself, that it would be to their better advancement that the special representation should be done away with, and that they should be represented generally by their more enlightened neighbours. The settlement of the land question was the question they must grapple with at the present time. There was a strong wave permeating throughout the whole colony in favour of increased and closer settlement, and, that being so, they could hardly divide the question of the settlement of lands of the colony into two different parts; they could not treat the settlement of Native lands on a different principle from the settlement of European lands. They must, as far as they were able, put the two together, allowing only such difference to be made as was occasioned by the difference in methods of living, the condition of the people, and other circumstances. If, as he had said, all Native lands were clothed with legal titles,—if every Native knew what his interest was, or every body of Natives knew what their interests were,—the whole thing would be much simplified, and settlement would be made far easier. There was another thing that the Natives required teaching. They stood in their own light. He failed to see why they should not participate in the different forms of local government, but they had stood aloof, and, as he had said, to their own disadvantage. If they could overcome the unpleasantness, as it were, of paying rates directly, and put themselves as ratepayers on the roll, they would have a strong voice in every district in the North Island in local self-government; they would have been in our local bodies, in the County Councils, and in the Road Boards, all being means of education to them, fitting them for higher grades. That, he held, the Natives should have done before, and he thought they should take the very earliest opportunity of accustoming themselves to the European methods of government. He had nothing to say against the action of the Native people at the present time in asking that they should have a separate Constitution; he only said they were ill-advised. He did not think it was for their good, and he did not see that any practical outcome whatever would result from it. With these few words, he trusted that,

Mr. Carroll

sooner or later, the Natives would fall into an easier and more comprehensive way of managing, or assisting to manage, their own affairs.

Sir R. STOUT regretted that the Native Minister was not present when an important Bill like this was being discussed. He thought that, knowing the feeling amongst the Natives of New Zealand, the honourable gentleman might have been present to take some little part in the debate. This, he (Sir R. Stout) thought, was an historical occasion. They had speaking that night, in fluent English, and with great logical ability, one of the Heke family. Fifty years ago Hone Heke was a name known wherever there was settlement in New Zealand as the name of one of the greatest warriors the white race have had to meet, and now one of the Heke family was speaking in English in the Parliament, urging that his people, following parliamentary precedents, should have local government established amongst them. He thought this was really an occasion that ought to be taken notice of by members of the House. Then, the next point he noticed was this: This was replied to by one who was in close blood alliance with another most important tribe on the east coast of the North Island. He, of course, could not say that the remedy proposed in dealing with local matters could at all be carried out, because there was no district set apart for Maori occupation, and it would be entirely impossible to say that the Maoris should be allowed to make laws for themselves independent of Europeans. There could not be two law-making bodies in one colony, and therefore it was impossible to say that the suggestion in the Bill of the honourable member could be given effect to. But he thought the Maoris might be met as the Maoris were met under the Native Land Administration Act of 1886. He believed they might have a greater voice in the management of their lands. Now, the honourable member had pointed out that by the Treaty of Waitangi they were to be kept in possession of their lands. Their lands were to be reserved to them. It was quite correct what the honourable gentleman had said—that bit by bit this Treaty had been violated. Of course, the lands had not been taken away from the Maoris without compensation; but he believed, if they had adopted the committee system which was provided for in the Act of 1886, they would have had greater control over their lands than they now possessed, or were likely to possess under what was called the individualising of their titles. Time would not permit him to give what might be termed a *résumé* of the various efforts made to give the Maoris some control over their affairs. If honourable members wished to study the history of these matters for themselves they would get it from most interesting documents, especially the able document by Sir Dillon Bell written about 1862, when the introduction of what was called the runanga system took place, at the time when the Maoris were much disturbed and at war with the Europeans. That system was introduced to a

small extent in the Hawke's Bay District, and it was carried out very well there; but it was not universal. In fact, the Maoris could not adopt such a system—it was too great an advance on their customs; and as they were at war with the Europeans they were not likely at that time to attend to self-government on the runanga system. He thought the Maoris should be met, however, for he did not think they could compete with Europeans in the race of life. They had not the same education. He did not mean merely literary education, but they had not the race education that our race had. It had taken us thousands of years to develop our civilisation, and it was perfectly impossible for the Maoris to compete with us on equal terms. That must be admitted at once; but they had the right to yield to them special rights, and to see that those rights were maintained, and those who would deprive the race of special representation would do a great injury to them. To say that they were to depend upon Europeans to voice their complaints would mean that their complaints would not be voiced at all, or, if they were voiced, it would simply be used at election-times—not for their benefit or in their interest, but for the benefit of, perhaps, some undesirable candidates. Then, what could be done? It was impossible that the Maoris could be given permission to make laws for themselves independently of any European legislation. That, he thought, the Maoris would see for themselves, if they considered, could not be yielded to them; but he thought this might be done for them: For purely Maori districts a Maori Bill might be introduced giving them some form of government to deal with their own lands. Of course, in dealing with the lands it would have to be under some supervision, because they might deal injuriously with some of their own tribe. If they had that sort of committee system, under which the owners were allowed to elect a committee among themselves—that was, a committee to manage all the lands that were either customary—that was, held under Maori custom—and that had never been through a Native Land Court, or lands the titles to which had not been individualised, they might be trained to habits of self-government which would be most beneficial to the race; and that was the direction in which he thought the reform should go. What he was really urging, of course, was what was contained in a Bill that he had some share in passing in 1886. He exceedingly regretted that this was repealed. It was true no Maoris availed themselves of the provisions, but the reason was very obvious. All those pakeha-Maoris who wished to have the management of the Maori lands, and those speculators who wished to get possession of the lands themselves, opposed this Bill, and urged the Maoris not to come under its provisions. And, then, it was repealed before the Maoris even knew what the Act contained. He would suggest that the House should pass the second reading of this Bill, if they wished to afford that courtesy to the honourable gentleman, and, while letting the

Maoris know that they could not obtain this great concession for which they asked—that of making laws for themselves—show them the House considered that some advance should be made towards them, and that some right should be given to them in dealing with their lands. Of course, this did not touch the bigger question, and, if Maori lands were required for purposes of settlement, then they must be taken for settlement just as European lands were taken for settlement; but those lands should only be taken under the same restrictions as covered European lands. The Government had no right to take Maori lands unless the Land for Settlements Act gave it, and unless the Maoris were sure that they had plenty of land left, and that the taking of their land would not injure them as a race. He believed the Maoris must always remain what might be termed an agricultural and pastoral people. No doubt, when we came to the colony they were not an agricultural and pastoral people, but they were developing in that direction now, and we could not expect them to come into our industrial life. They were not capable of entering into our manufactories, and they were not capable of dealing with our concerns, and it could only be expected that their young people could be trained to agricultural and pastoral industries. In dealing with their lands, that should be kept in view, because if they were deprived of large blocks of land it would be simply leading the race to extinction. Another thing that he thought would help them greatly in the future was that they were all learning the English language. That would be of immense service to them, as it would enable them to become acquainted with our views and ideas and with our industries better than anything else. He had made these few remarks on the Bill because he thought the mere fact that they had such a number of Maoris protesting against the present laws—the petition was signed by over six thousand—showed that there was considerable unrest amongst the Maori people, and he thought it was the duty of the Legislature to see that all classes of the community were contented and happy, and were prepared to abide by the institutions of the country. He had met a good many Maoris at a meeting at Waipatu, and there he had had a long talk with them on the subject. He pointed out some of the things that could not be yielded. But he found that many of them were able to argue the position well, and that many of them were reasonable, and he thought if they were met in that spirit the agitation that had been going on for many years amongst them might be done away with. If what they asked for in this Bill could not be granted, they might be met, as he had said, by giving them something that would be beneficial to them, and that would help to train them into habits of government. He again repeated that the mere fact that one whose ancestors had occupied such an important position in the north of this Island had proposed that Bill, and that there were so many Maoris listening to that debate, who were asking for nothing but what

was according to strict parliamentary rules and procedure, was an object-lesson to the House. He therefore hoped honourable members would try to meet them in some way, to get rid of the dissatisfaction that existed amongst them, and to show them that we had every desire to preserve the race.

Mr. E. M. SMITH said the honourable member for Wellington City (Sir R. Stout) had asked honourable members, out of courtesy to the honourable gentleman who introduced the Bill, to pass it.

Sir R. STOUT.—I said, "Read it a second time."

Mr. E. M. SMITH.—That would be only doing an injustice to the honourable gentleman.

Mr. T. MACKENZIE.—Why did you do it to the honourable member for Riverton?

Mr. E. M. SMITH asked what that had to do with this Bill. In this Bill the honourable member asked for a Parliament to be set up in order to allow the Natives to deal with their lands and other properties, which would imply that the Natives had not been treated fairly and justly in the past, and were not being fairly treated at the present time. In his own electorate there were many Natives, and, without wishing to be egotistical, he might say he had done a great deal in the interests of the Natives. He could claim that he had done a good deal to break down the barrier which kept the Maoris from civilisation. He knew that it would be a great mistake to allow these people to set up a special Parliament for themselves. He knew no people in the Southern Hemisphere that had been treated so well by the Imperial Government and the Parliament of New Zealand as this people had been. Why, these lords of the soil were growing richer and richer every year; and, as time went on, if they dealt with the lands as at present, what would be the result? Already the Maoris were able to keep their racehorses, and enjoy the sports of the civilised world, just the same as the Europeans. In his own district, if the Maoris had anything to bring before Parliament, they did not go to their own representatives, they came to him. Did he not advocate the interests of Natives as well as of the Europeans, and had he not tried session after session to get for them that £700 that had been wrongfully withheld from them for years? The money was voted by Parliament last session, but still the Maoris had not had the money paid over to them. He hoped the Colonial Treasurer would bear this in mind, and would bring the same item down on the estimates again, and would see that it was paid to the Natives. If they took into consideration the condition of the aboriginal natives of New Zealand when the first ship came to the colony, and compared it with their condition at the present time, the Natives ought to be proud that they had been brought to the high state of civilisation they found themselves in now. He thought they had to give us credit for what we had done, and he knew they did. There was no people in the world at the present moment occupying the freedom

Sir R. Stout

and protection these Natives of New Zealand enjoyed under our protection and rule. We did not look upon ourselves as being superior in any way. We treated them as our equals, and were doing the same for them as for ourselves. We were dealing with their lands on their behalf—gathering in the rents, and making roads. At the present time the Europeans were taxed for fencing and improving the country, while the Natives were not called upon to pay for dividing-fences. And yet they were told the Natives required a special Parliament, and control of the land themselves! What would the result be if we set up a Parliament for them, and cast them adrift? They would soon go back into rebellion, and the same feuds would arise between tribes that formerly existed. The proposal was ridiculous. What we should do for the Natives was to individualise the titles to the land, and give Crown grants to those who owned it. He knew that a large number of Natives were disappointed because they could not vote at the last election, and in consequence of this he lost the support of a large number of Natives who would have recorded their votes in his favour. Through the titles to their land not having been individualised they could not do so. What he urged the Government to do was to bring both races under one and the same law. The country was now being settled so far back that there were now only twenty miles separating his district from the Auckland District. The land was being settled, and roads made, and he hoped next summer to be able to ride through from his district to Auckland. He knew that the Natives themselves were satisfied to deal with their own lands. They only wanted to have their titles individualised. He knew that some of the Natives in his district were farming just as intelligently as Europeans, rearing cattle and cropping just the same, and got as good crops; and when they got their produce to market they knew how to dispose of it just as well as the Europeans. They got the best prices, and he could assure the House that they knew how many beans made five, and how many shillings were in a pound, just as well as the Europeans. But there were grievances which the Government might long ago have cleared up; amongst others, the payment of £700 which was awarded to them by the Fox Commission as far back as 1884, and had never yet been paid to them. These people were using the roads, and were not contributing anything towards them. They were not called upon to pay for dividing-fences, and they were getting all the benefits of civilisation. They were getting schools, and the young Natives were being educated like Europeans. It would have been far wiser in the early days if the young New Zealanders had been taught the English tongue instead of being educated in their own language. And this brought him to the question of lands that had been set aside for the purpose of teaching the Natives agriculture. As he rode past these lands, going to the Breakwater, he saw that these lands were not being used for the purposes for which they were set

aside; and the time had come when the Crown should get hold of them and use them for a good purpose. It would be an act of folly to pass the second reading of this Bill, because if they did so it would go forth to the world that these Natives wanted a Constitution of their own as they were not treated in a fair and just manner. How long was it since persons belonging to these different tribes were running about with tattooed heads in boxes to sell them, exhibiting them, and causing terror; and how long was it since Natives were forced to come down from Waikato and go into the bush, and stop there for months in hiding? He could point out Native clearings whither the Natives had to skeddaddle out of the way of the Waikatos. They did not want to go back to that. They wanted peace, progress, and prosperity; and, in addition to that, the Natives had got protection and all the blessings civilisation could pour down upon them. He believed this Bill had only been brought in by the honourable gentleman as a token of the respect he had for his race; but he would ask him not to press even its second reading, because it would be an act of folly to do so. He wanted to see the Natives and Europeans as fast friends as possible, and no difference made between the races. The world had looked upon New Zealand with admiration for the way in which the Europeans had preserved and treated the Native race. There was now a peaceful settlement around the Waimate Plains, which had been a disgrace to the colony for years, and what was now wanted to be done was to remedy a few grievances that still existed with regard to the Native race. He would vote against the Bill.

Dr. NEWMAN said he had seconded the motion *pro forma*, because he knew the honourable gentleman was exceedingly anxious to have discussion; but he felt largely with the honourable gentleman who had just sat down, that it would be absurd to pass this Bill: and the honourable gentleman could not suppose that it had any chance of passing through the House. As a matter of fact, the Maoris had had a Parliament of their own for a considerable time past, one that had sat for some two years, and done nearly as much as Parliament itself had done. The Maori Parliament passed one resolution—that on Sunday morning boots should be blacked, and that the price should be twopence; but it was found impossible to carry it out, for the simple reason that no one could be found to do the boot-blackening. The honourable member for Waiapu advocated the doing away with the special Maori representation in Parliament; but he (Dr. Newman) thought that would be nothing short of a calamity to the Maori race. The Natives were so scattered that it would be utterly impossible for them to secure representation in Parliament under the European system. As for passing this Bill and conferring upon the Natives a special Constitution of their own, it was idle to suppose they could at this time of day set up any independent Native tribunal, and the House should say emphatically that it

would have nothing of the kind. It was utterly absurd to talk of giving Home Rule to the Natives. Home Rule might be a fair claim in Ireland or Norway, but it was idle to talk of giving it to a mere handful of Natives scattered about in all directions. He thought the honourable gentleman would have done a great deal of good if he went back to the Natives and told them the House was strongly opposed to such a proposal as this, because, apart from the honourable gentleman himself, nobody would dream of voting for this Bill, if it were to be given effect to. They had had enough of this kind of thing when the King-movement was created, and when the Queen's writ would not run. Now the Queen's writ ran throughout New Zealand, and it was idle to suppose they would consent to re-establish the old order of things. Such a Bill as this, if passed, would lead to endless trouble. He thought if they were to start anything of the kind that the mover wanted it would lead to far greater trouble amongst the Maoris, and to deeper discontent, than they would ever have without it. Even if the honourable gentleman were successful in obtaining for his people the constitution that he desired, it certainly would not prove to be so satisfactory to them as the Constitution which gave them now a shelter within these walls.

Mr. T. MACKENZIE said his predecessor in the debate seemed to think that the Maoris had received every justice at the hands of the European population resident in the colony. He appeared to consider that the honourable member representing the Northern Maori District had no right whatever to come to the House and ask that his people should be allowed to have some voice in the administration of their own Native lands. Now, he (Mr. T. Mackenzie) took it that the whole, or, at any rate, the greater part, of their history in regard to Native-land transactions in this colony from its foundation had been scandalous. On hearing the honourable member for New Plymouth saying that the Native race had been fairly and justly treated, one naturally recollected that only within the last two or three sessions there had been shown up one of the most scandalous transactions it was possible to conceive of in the way of Native-land administration as conducted by the Government. He referred to the series of improprieties and swindles carried on in the Auckland Province under the aegis of the present Government. In view of circumstances such as those, was it not reasonable that the Maoris should be anxious to be allowed to manage their own affairs: and, in any case, could they be worse managed than they had been under the various Administrations of the colony? He had very considerable sympathy with the honourable gentleman who was moving in this matter, and did not think he was at all entitled to receive the lecture which the honourable member for Wellington Suburbs had administered to him. One would really suppose the honourable gentleman had no right to come to the House and advocate a measure of this sort. But he took it that the

honourable member for the Northern Maori District had as much right to advocate this measure as, in fact that he had infinitely more right to advocate it than, any honourable member had to bring into the House and ask the House to pass such a ridiculous Bill as the one to put women into Parliament. Holding that view, he thought it rather amusing that this chastisement should be administered by the honourable member for Wellington Suburbs. He would certainly vote for the second reading of the Bill. He did not suppose it would become law, but, even if it did, the Maoris could not possibly make a worse mess of their own affairs than had been made of them by the several European Administrations of the colony.

Mr. G. HUTCHISON said the honourable member for Wellington City (Sir R. Stout) had referred to it as being an interesting historical occasion when they found a descendant of Hone Heke, the great chief who assisted at the Treaty of Waitangi, after a lapse of half a century, pleading in Parliament for a recognition of their rights, or what his people understood to be their rights, under that Treaty. It certainly was historical and interesting. It was also interesting, and at the same time most significant, to find another member of the Maori race, himself representing a European constituency, forced to resist, or, at any rate, to damp, the aspirations of his brethren. In that he was only illustrating the march of events, which, unfortunately, must, to some extent at least, more or less extinguish the aspirations of a noble but fated aboriginal race. Yet he (Mr. Hutchison) thought this Bill should not have met with the disapproval that it had met with from the Government benches. In the speech which the honourable member for Waiapu (Mr. Carroll) gave to the House he could not claim to have spoken as "the Minister representing the Native race." That could hardly be. It would be an unnatural position for him to occupy, because it was quite clear that in this instance that honourable gentleman did not represent the Maori race, for it was certain that not one of the three representatives from the special Maori districts of the North Island would agree with the Minister in what he said. The honourable gentleman could not, therefore, be taken to have spoken as "the Minister representing the Native race," but had spoken as the representative of the European constituency of Waiapu. As such, his utterances had much weight and force, and had a significance which, sorrowful to say, was the inevitable history of races such as the Maori—not many, however, of which had so many noble characteristics as this aboriginal people. He (Mr. Hutchison) took it that this measure was a protest against the long course of injustice that the Native race had suffered at the hands of Europeans, for he could not believe that any one who had seen the workings of the Native-land administration in this country could have any other opinion than that it had been a disastrous experience to the Maori people. That, however, was a sorrow often told; and he was not sure Parliament could

now offer any adequate remedy, unless it was by determining to do something in future to give the Maori people that which more than any other thing they strongly desired—namely, some more effectual voice in the administration of the lands that were left to them. The honourable gentleman who introduced this Bill urged the House to grant a Native Constitution. But that was impossible. There could not be two Constitutions in the colony, one applicable to the European population, and another applicable to the Maori race, who were scattered, in many parts, amongst the European population. That, as he said, would be quite impossible and impracticable; but what they might aspire to was to have some more direct control in the administration of their own lands. The honourable member for Waiapu urged that what they should do would be to individualise, as far as possible, the Native lands, and to have corporate dealings as to large areas. Now, he (Mr. Hutchison) took it that the great error in all our Native-land legislation had been the endeavour to individualise Native titles. It was quite alien to the genius of the Maoris that there should be this tenure, which had the effect of artificially creating shares in land, and so affording opportunities for speculators to deal with Maoris apart from their tribal interests. The hope for the future was in recognising the communal interests throughout this Island, and allowing the Native people, by their committees, to so administer their lands as to preserve to them, as communities, the interest of joint proprietorship in the disposition of the soil. He believed the honourable member for the Eastern Maori District had some Bill with that object in view. The honourable member could not now hope to introduce or to speak on it this session, seeing how far the session had advanced. But in that or some such Bill would be found the secret of the amelioration of the Native race in respect of the land that was left to them. Let their lands be administered according to the old tribal traditions of the Native people, and a large share of contentment would follow, instead of there being, as at present, too much ground for dissatisfaction. He thought the Bill introduced by the honourable member for the Northern Maori District ought to receive the attention of the House, if only as a protest against the injustice of the past, and should be welcomed as a recognition that Parliament was the source from which such a Constitution was to be sought. Feeling as he (Mr. Hutchison) did that it was impossible for the honourable member for the Northern Maori District to get what he wanted literally, the colony ought, as a matter of duty, at any rate to endeavour to give the Natives a larger and more direct voice in the administration of their own lands, for in their lands was centred the great desire to preserve their best traditions as an ancient people.

Captain RUSSELL said if it were only a matter of courtesy no person would have more pleasure than himself in voting for the second

Mr. T. Mackenzie

reading of the Bill; but, on the same principle that induced him to criticize the second reading, or rather to endeavour to prevent the second reading, of the Riverton Harbour Board Bill, he felt it to be his duty to throw aside on this occasion one's natural desire to be courteous to the honourable gentleman, and refuse a second reading to a Bill such as this. He did so with considerable pain, inasmuch as he would like to afford opportunity for the most careful consideration of any proposal which was put forward by their Maori friends who represented the Maori constituencies of the colony. But, having had for many years distinct opinions upon the subject of this Bill, he was not inclined to go back on those opinions that he had expressed and advocated so far back as 1881 in the House, and vote for a proposition which seemed to him to be radically wrong, viewed from the standpoint of a New Zealand colonist, and also from the standpoint of a friend of the Maori people. It was always interesting to hear a speech from the honourable member for Waiapu. During the many years that he had had the pleasure of knowing that honourable gentleman in the House he had always found him to be a strong sympathizer with the interests of the Maori people; but that night he, it seemed to him (Captain Russell), had ceased to have that sympathy for the Maori people, and spoke purely from the official point of view of a Minister representing white people, who had really only a slight interest in the welfare of the Natives. He had observed that in almost everything the honourable gentleman said the tone was so different from the tone they had been accustomed to in former years that he wondered how a change so complete could be made. They had heard very much about the Treaty of Waitangi and the pre-emptive right which by the Treaty of Waitangi was secured to the Government; but it always seemed to him that there had been a misinterpretation of the word "pre-emption." It did not mean, and he could not believe it ever did mean, that the Government had the right to purchase the Maori lands at whatever price they chose to give for them. But they were to have the right first of all to deal with the Maori land, as was expressed by the word itself. But it was really this question of pre-emption which had, he believed, caused this Bill to be introduced. There was an unrest throughout the whole of the Maori people now as to the dealings which were to take place for their lands. That really was the reason for the introduction of the Bill. It was not, in all probability, that the Native people felt they were likely to receive injustice from their white fellow-colonists, but deep down in their hearts lurked the fear that the Treaty of Waitangi was to be violated—that, whereas by the first Native Land Act, of 1862, the right of pre-emption, or, rather, the right of sole emption by the Crown, was relinquished, and the Maori people were granted the same privilege in dealing with their lands which had been afforded from time immemorial to the white people, this was now to be taken away from them again,

and that the privilege which they had exercised, perhaps unwisely, for thirty years was no longer to be continued to them. That really, he believed, was the source of this Bill. It was notorious that the policy of the Government was to acquire Native land—honestly if they could, but to acquire Native land—and that was what was causing trouble amongst the Maori people. It had always been his belief that there was but one true system of dealing with the Native people, and that was to set aside Maori doctrine and Maori doctors, and all quack proceedings, and endeavour to deal with them on true common-sense principles. It was the only way, he was convinced, by which they could be made happy and contented subjects of the Queen. The honourable

member for New Plymouth amused him when he said, in a condescending kind of way, that he was prepared to treat the Natives as equals. After the speech of the honourable member for the Northern Maori District,—a gentleman who was descended from an illustrious line of ancestors, and a gentleman who spoke the English language in a manner very few of those present could imitate,—for the honourable member for New Plymouth to say what he said was to him a piece of condescension that was rather amusing. How ought they to set to work to deal with this problem? There was, of course, the question of special representation. That was a question he spoke upon so far back as 1881, and he took a line opposed to that of many honourable gentlemen who had spoken that evening, and whose opinions he received with considerable deference. But for many years past it had seemed to him that it was possible to do away with the special representation, and yet, without undue "Gerrymandering," so to arrange certain constituencies that the Native people should have their own special representatives. Under such a system nearly all members from the country districts in the North Island would have a direct interest in looking after Native affairs. Take the district on the East Coast to the northward of Tolaga Bay: A constituency in that neighbourhood might be picked out which undoubtedly would have an opportunity of returning a Maori member if they chose, or a gentleman of mixed race if they thought fit. At any rate, the Native people in that district would be able to select their own representative. They would so completely outnumber the European people that if they chose to have their own representative they could do so. Then, again, in the King-country proper they might do what he suggested without departing from what he believed to be the vicious principle of dividing districts into localities without any community of interests so as to secure representation on a numerical basis. He did not think that had worked well. He would like to see a constituency carved out in the neighbourhood of the King-country, in which the Natives would be able to elect a member of their race to represent them if they thought fit. Then, again, in the neighbourhood of Hokianga and Mangonui it might be possible

to carve out a district from which the Natives might send a Maori representative to that House. Therefore in the North Island there would be three constituencies which would still be able to send a Maori representative to the House if they thought fit. In the South Island, he regretted to say, that might not be so; but he would be very happy to welcome the present member for the Southern Maori District as a representative of any constituency of the South Island, if they thought fit to send him. In addition to that, instead of Maori questions being unthought-of and practically unknown in many of the constituencies in the North Island, there would be an evidence of Maori influence felt in great numbers of those constituencies. The consequence would be that, as all our elections, or almost all of them, were closely contested, it would be necessary for candidates to consider Maori interests, to go out among the Maori people, to ascertain their wishes, and to try to persuade them that community of interests between pakeha and Maori was essential for the true progress of the Maori people. Then they came to the question of dealing with Native land. The dealing with their lands was, of course, a difficult point. He disagreed with the honourable member for Patea when he said that we ought to endeavour to perpetuate the tribal interests, and he was sorry to hear the honourable member for the Northern Maori District agree with the honourable member. In their own interests it was to be hoped that the Maori people would amalgamate as far as possible and as speedily as possible with the European people. If they did not do so, as a race they would perish absolutely; their only chance of survival was to merge with the European population. If they did so, there might be a future before them. They saw throughout all nature that the animal which could become domesticated survived, and that the animal which resisted domestication perished; and so it would be with the Maori people. The only possible way the race could be perpetuated, and transmit their name and blood, was by mixing with the European people. If we perpetuated the tribal system the Natives would remain in the same condition as they were in now, and the result of the communal holding of land must be as he had indicated. The only way in which we could avert the danger he had alluded to was, in his opinion, at any rate, to individualise the title to land. Of course one was liable to have it said that he was speaking in the interests of the speculator; but he was not doing so, and never had done so. It was quite possible—and he would be happy to see it in any Bill—to have a clause inserted to prevent the alienation of Maori land to any extent that might be conducive to speculation. Let them place each individual Native in possession of so much land as would make it impossible for him to become a pauper. To place him in a position in which he would not be obliged to work would be a misfortune to the Maori people. No man was happy unless he had plenty of occupation, and most men were liable to

Captain Russell

become vicious unless they had plenty of work to do; and, so long as the Maoris simply lived upon their rents, so long must they live a life of idleness, which would tend to bring about a life of vice. If the Native race was to be perpetuated, and they were to be able-bodied men and good citizens, they must have the responsibilities of life upon them, and that could only be done by giving them their individual pieces of land. The honourable member for Wellington City (Sir R. Stout) said that the Natives were becoming an agricultural and pastoral people, and would remain so, but that they were not likely ever to become mechanics or artisans. That being so, let them be placed upon the land, and give them individual holdings, so that there would be an encouragement to family life and to habits of frugality and industry, which habits were not encouraged under the present communal system. What was now frightening the Natives was no doubt the thought that their land would be taken from them. Of course, it was necessary that the same law which might be made to apply to Europeans should be made also to apply to the Maori people; but any system by which the land would be taken from the Native people without their consent would be a retrograde movement, and a movement which he hoped the House would not consent to. He did not know whether the House would agree with that, but that was his opinion, at any rate. Granting, as he would, to the Natives the same privileges as were accorded to Europeans, he would impose upon the Natives the like responsibilities which were imposed upon the European people, and that could best be done by individualising their titles. To endeavour to tax their land for local and General Government purposes, without also conceding to the Natives their true right to the proprietorship in their land, seemed to him to be essentially wrong. There could be no doubt that there would be hardship in some cases in taxing the Native land as soon as the title was individualised. It might be and it was, no doubt, true that to individualise the whole of the land would result in some areas being awarded to Natives which would be of comparatively small value, and in such cases it would be ruinous to individualise the title; but that was a point which might be discussed on some future occasion, and he need not go into it at the present time. There might appear to be cases of hardship to Natives in taxing their land so soon as it was individualised: for instance, where the land, on individualisation, was absolutely unproductive it could be said it would not pay the tax imposed upon it. But there was very little Native land which could not be leased so as to pay the taxation upon it, and provision might be made for leasing such land with no improvement clause, —the land to be handed back to the Native owners, upon the determination of the lease, in its improved condition. Under such conditions the land would come under profitable occupation. As regarded the speculator, he was quite prepared to agree to the reimposition of any restrictions to prevent the aliena-

tion of large areas of Native land. Let them not confound the issue by saying that the persons who spoke in the direction in which he was speaking were speaking in the interests of the speculator. Nothing could be further from his aim. Let honourable members always bear in mind that it was their duty, as the more advanced and more highly-educated race, to endeavour by all the means in their power to elevate the Native people. If they did their duty in this respect he believed the Native race need not perish; but unless they did what was right in this matter the result would be that the Native race would perish, and that was a thing which he believed no person in that House desired.

Mr. STEVENS said it was seldom he had the pleasure of agreeing with the honourable member for Hawke's Bay, but he had had very great pleasure indeed in listening to the speech which the honourable gentleman had just delivered—a speech which was so much in accord with his own views on this question. He was not at all surprised at the honourable member for the Northern Maori District having introduced this Bill for the purpose of enabling him to get that which he believed to be the rights of his people; but the Bill was so foreign to what Europeans considered right that it would be to him impossible to support it—nay, even to vote for giving it a second reading, as was desired by the honourable member for Wellington City (Sir R. Stout), as a matter of courtesy to the honourable member who introduced the Bill. That was only what the Maori would call "patipati"—that was a little flattery by Sir Robert Stout. If you did not intend the Bill to become law you only gave it a half-hearted support, and were therefore not sincere in your support. He thought they would be showing the greatest possible kindness to the honourable gentleman if they did that which he very clearly indicated in his speech when he said, "I shall not require honourable gentlemen to express opinions in favour of the Bill, but, any opinions being expressed, the Native people will have their minds appeased through knowing what the opinion of Parliament is." Those were, in substance, the honourable gentleman's words, and he (Mr. Stevens) was speaking now in order that the Native people might know what his opinion was as a member of the Legislature. It was this: that the Native people had been well and fairly and properly treated—ininitely better than any other race of savages who had ever lived under the British Crown. They had been treated in such a way as they would not have been treated had France taken possession of the country instead of England. They had the Treaty of Waitangi given to them, and it was contended by all those who were agitating on behalf of the Natives, for the purpose of getting up what he called unnecessary and unjust strife between the two races, that it would be just to have the Treaty of Waitangi reverted to. He said that it would be impossible, and unjust not only to the Europeans, but more so to the

Natives, inasmuch as the Natives themselves, having accepted the Treaty in the first instance, found it was impossible under that Treaty to carry out their wishes with the Government of this colony. When the Waitara war broke out near Taranaki the cause of it was that Wiremu Kingi said, "Some other chief sold my land to the Crown; and I warn the Government not to go on that land. If the Government does go on it, there will be bloodshed." And surely enough there was. That was before the days of the existence of the Native Land Court. What was done; and what was it absolutely necessary to provide? That some tribunal should be set up to ascertain the Native rights to their lands. In the absence of that, bloodshed would have been continued and perpetuated under the Treaty of Waitangi, because there was no tribunal of any kind by which the several tribes or the individuals could have their titles defined to their respective portions of the land. Hence the absolute necessity for the setting-up of the Native Land Court. The Natives themselves elected to send their representatives to Parliament, and they also elected to accept through their representatives the measures passed in the House constituting the Native Land Court. This being the case, he took it that it was with their own assistance, and their own acquiescence, and in every respect by their own wish, that the Native Land Court was constituted, and substituted for the provision of the Treaty of Waitangi. The Treaty of Waitangi was not sufficiently comprehensive, nor did it give the power that the Natives supposed at the time was given. It was a merely tentative measure to satisfy the minds of the Natives, who were neither more nor less than savages in those days, and he said it was a very good step in the right direction, but it was only the initiative step towards bringing them under the laws it was necessary for them to live under, and which he said they had lived well and fairly under, with the exception of a war which occurred through a pure misunderstanding between the Natives and the Government. If the honourable gentleman in charge of the Bill would accept his opinion, as one who had had a life's experience with the Natives, and considerable experience in dealing with them, he would use every effort possible for the purpose of assisting the Parliament of New Zealand, to which he belonged, to make such European laws as would be beneficial both to the Europeans and the Natives. But to expect that they could grant a special Constitution for the purpose of enabling the Natives to deal with all questions affecting their landed estate and their own property must be quite beyond that honourable gentleman's conception. He never for one moment, he hoped, thought that such a law could be granted. He (Mr. Stevens) thought it would be highly imprudent and improper to do such a thing. He was extremely astonished at the honourable member for Patea when he said that he agreed with the honourable member for the Northern Maori District in introducing the Bill, and argued that the Na-

tive land should be held according to tribal right in future. The honourable member for Patea was endeavouring to do all he could, he presumed, for the future advancement, prosperity, and welfare of the Native race; and did he propose to bring that about by a perpetuation of the system of communism in which the Maoris had lived, and in which they had had great difficulties to contend with? It was well known to every member who lived in any country district in the North Island that the great tribal dissensions and bitter feelings that existed among the Natives were a consequence of their being forced to live in a state of communism, instead of having their property defined and subdivided. In all cases where practicable it should be individualised, so that they should pay all the penalties and derive all the benefits that Europeans paid and derived. This was the first step in the right direction. It was the step he had advocated in 1882, 1883, and 1884, while in the House. A Bill called the Native Committees Bill was introduced in 1883, and he pointed out at the time it was being passed that it was a positive absurdity, as also would be any similar Act, for the very reason that those persons who would constitute the committee would be owners of the land, and therefore they would be plaintiffs, defendants, Judge, and jury, and it would be physically impossible to arrive at any satisfactory settlement of the case. The one true and safe way for the Maoris of this country was to submit their lands to the gentlemen who occupied the benches of the Native Land Court, and to accept their decision upon the subject, notwithstanding all that might have been said about their erring in judgment, or to the effect that many of the officials had not been competent. But he took it, the constitution of the Native Land Courts, which were to define titles purely upon Native custom, had now become so surrounded with the ridiculous peculiarities of English law that they did not know whether it was Native custom or English law that had to decide the question of ownership before the Court. The Acts formerly said, "The Judge shall, according to Native custom, ascertain what the title is"; and immediately Native custom was mentioned now in the Native Land Court some solicitor said, "Oh, yes; but that is not in accordance with English law"; and therefore they had so surrounded the simple methods which the Natives had of ascertaining their own titles that they had made confusion worse confounded, and he was still afraid they were going to perpetuate that evil. It would be a very great advantage indeed to the colony, and especially to the Natives, if they could by some means repeal every Act that ever had anything to do with the ascertainment of Native titles, and re-enact the whole of the statutes in that respect, or, rather, repeal the whole of them and enact fresh legislation which would simplify the whole procedure, so that the Natives themselves might go before the Native Land Court and say, "This is my land, and this is the

Mr. Stevens

reason why I am entitled to it." That was what was required, and until some such thing was done all legislation they might bring down, still surrounded with the many technicalities of English law that existed at present, would not be successful in settling the Native difficulty in a satisfactory and impartial manner. As to the epithets, such as land-doctors, land-sharks, and various others, used towards the many gentlemen who dealt in Native lands, and whose existence was absolutely necessary — a gentleman who was employed as a Native expert or interpreter was always characterized as a shark, or by some other expression that was exceedingly uncomplimentary; and because there had been some persons engaged in that business who had erred, or who had been dishonest, it was not fair or just that all should be characterized in the same category. He was not saying this because he was a member of the fraternity himself; he was saying it because he felt it to be unfair and unjust that any set of citizens of the colony should be characterized without distinction in this manner.

Mr. BELL. — What did you say about the lawyers?

Mr. STEVENS said what he said about them was that they understood a great deal about English law, and if there was less of it there would be less work for them.

Mr. BELL. — Native agents do not understand any law at all.

Mr. STEVENS said they were not supposed to know any law. They were supposed to translate Maori into English, and *vice versa*, and he thought they did it very well. With respect to the way in which the colony should acquire land from the Natives and in which Native lands should be dealt with, he had stated his opinion so repeatedly that it was quite superfluous to utter another sentence on the subject: if they required all their waste lands — and he designated all Native lands as waste lands — if they desired to see all their waste lands settled, they should be settled on the same principle as the waste lands of the Crown were disposed of to a certain extent. If an individual wanted to acquire land from a Native it was ridiculous not to allow that Native to dispose of it to his friend or to any person who was willing to pay a better price than the Government could afford to pay. But immediately it was seen that a private individual was about to acquire land from a Native, that Native was about to be cheated. He said the days of cheating the Natives had gone past many years ago. An ordinary Native was as capable of obtaining a fair price for his property as were most Europeans that he knew. He could assure the honourable gentleman that if he wished to do the best he could in order to enable his people to acquire, or, rather, to obtain, the best value for their land they should have the land disposed of under the same system as lands were disposed of under the Waste Lands Act. But

11.0. to allow any enormous territory to be taken up by any syndicate or company at some ridiculously low price would

be, he thought, a manifest injustice both to the Natives and to the colony. They should be careful in future Native-land legislation not to do the Natives an injustice by re-enacting the pre-emptive right; because the Government had now the right of pre-emption to this extent: they might pay £5 or 5s. as an advance on any area of country they thought proper, but no one individual could acquire the right of pre-emption to purchase land.

COUNT-OUT.

Mr. STEVENS having called attention to the state of the House,

Mr. SPEAKER counted the House, and, a quorum not being present,

The House was adjourned at five minutes past eleven o'clock p.m.

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

Tuesday, 11th September, 1894.

First Reading—Third Readings—Oaths Bill—Hamilton Domains Empowering Bill—Gaming Bill.

The Hon. the SPEAKER took the chair at half-past two o'clock.

PRAYERS.

FIRST READING.

Rating on Unimproved Value Bill.

THIRD READINGS.

Waimakariri—Ashley Water-supply Board Loan Bill, Newmarket Hall Bill.

OATHS BILL.

IN COMMITTEE.

New clause.—“All witnesses who are infants under the age of twelve years shall be examined without oath, and shall be required, as a preliminary to their examination as witnesses, to make the following declaration: ‘I promise to speak the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth’; and such declaration shall be of the same force and effect as if such witness had taken an oath.”

The Hon. Mr. MACGREGOR moved, That the word “shall,” before the words “be examined,” in the second line, be struck out, with a view of inserting the word “may.”

The Committee divided on the question, “That the word ‘shall’ stand part of the clause.”

AYES, 14.

Acland	Kelly	Rigg
Barnicoat	Mantell	Shrimski
Bolt	Montgomery	Swanson
Dignan	Oliver	Taiaroa.
Feldwick	Pharazyn	

NOES, 17.

Bowen	McLean	Wahawaha
Buckley	Morris	Walker, L.
Jennings	Ormond	Whitmore
Kerr	Reynolds	Whyte
MacGregor	Richardson	Williams.
McCullough	Stewart	

Majority against, 3.

Word “shall” struck out, and word “may” inserted.

Bill reported, with amendments.

HAMILTON DOMAINS EMPOWERING BILL.

On the question, *That this Bill be committed*, The Hon. Mr. SHRIMSKI said that when the Bill was before the Council for its second reading he asked the honourable gentleman in charge of the Bill if there was any limit to the amount of improvements that would have to be paid for, and, as he did not receive a satisfactory reply from the honourable gentleman, he felt bound to renew the question. It appeared to him that, if these properties were handed over to certain persons, as provided in the Bill, those persons might so improve the properties that no one could afford to buy them out, and the lands might thus become their own. He thought, therefore, that some information should be afforded to the public as to what amount of valuation the lessees were entitled to receive.

The Hon. Mr. McCULLOUGH regretted that he had not made himself clear to the honourable gentleman. He had since received a telegram from the Mayor of Hamilton which answered the question asked by the honourable gentleman. The Mayor said the improvements were only protected for twenty-eight years all told—that was, a term of fourteen years, and the second term of fourteen years as provided in the Second Schedule of the Bill—after which the whole would revert to the lessor.

Bill committed.

GAMING BILL.

The Managers appointed by the Legislative Council to meet the Managers appointed by the House of Representatives at a second Conference on the Gaming Bill reported that the amendments made by the Legislative Council had been agreed to.

The Council adjourned at twenty-five minutes to four o'clock p.m.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.

Tuesday, 11th September, 1894.

Third Reading—Government Debentures—Government Advertisements—Sleepers—Taranaki Assessment—Warlike Stores—Gravel-pits—Hastings Post-and-telegraph Office—Food and Drugs imported—Volunteer Decorations—Horowhenua Post-office—Local Bodies' Loans—Government Railways Bill—Rating of Crown Lands Bill.

Mr. SPEAKER took the chair at half-past two o'clock.

PRAYERS.

THIRD READING.

Destitute Persons Bill.

GOVERNMENT DEBENTURES.

On the motion of Mr. G. HUTCHISON, it was ordered, That a return be laid before this

House giving the result, by computation, of the value, according to current quotations on the London market, of the several parcels of Government debentures held on the 31st March last by—(1) the Post Office, (2) the Government Insurance Department, and (3) the Public Trust Office.

GOVERNMENT ADVERTISEMENTS.

On the motion of Mr. CARNEILL, it was ordered, That a return be laid before this House showing the amounts paid by the late Government to the several newspapers during the years of 1887, 1888, 1889, and 1890, and the amounts paid by the Railway Commissioners for advertising during the same term of years, names of the papers, and the amounts paid to each paper.

SLEEPERS.

On the motion of Mr. G. J. SMITH, it was ordered, That a return be prepared by the Railway Department and laid before this House showing—(1) The number of sleepers on hand on the 31st August, 1894; and (2) the localities and numbers where same are stacked.

TARANAKI ASSESSMENT.

Mr. E. M. SMITH asked the Colonial Treasurer, If it is true that the Commissioner of Taxes has made an offer to the Taranaki County Council, by circular, asking the said Council to furnish the Tax Department with a list of valuations at the cost of copying the same, in consideration for which the Tax Department will allow local bodies the use of maps and section-lists, on acceptance of the offer? And, if so, will the Government contribute a fair proportion towards the cost of assessment, in addition to the present conditions? This was a very important question indeed. The reason he asked it was that this county was in a very bad financial position, what with its overdraft, bad roads, bridges washed away, and the Government having given them no assistance; and now that they had thrown upon these local bodies the valuations the Government actually wanted these County Councils to do the valuation for them, and to supply them with the valuations in consideration of having the use of maps and section-lists. He thought it was only fair, the Government having thrown the expense of making valuations on the local bodies, that the Government should contribute something towards the expense entailed.

Mr. WARD was sorry to hear that these local bodies' finances were so bad. He regretted, however, that he must give the honourable gentleman the same reply he had already given to honourable gentlemen asking similar questions with regard to local bodies: that was, that the Government could not give any assistance in the direction indicated.

WARLIKE STORES.

Mr. G. W. RUSSELL asked the Government, Will they, through His Excellency the Governor, urge upon the Imperial authorities the

Mr. G. Hutchison

desirability of establishing a dépôt of warlike stores at Wellington from which the direct steamers trading to the colony could, if necessary, be turned at short notice into armed cruisers, thus tending to maintain the export trade of the colony? He thought this was a most important question. It was one which affected the export trade of the colony, and therefore without any further preface he would ask for an answer to the question.

Mr. SEDDON said that full inquiries into this matter would be made, and, as soon as those inquiries were completed he would let the honourable member know the result.

GRAVEL-PITS.

Mr. G. J. SMITH asked the Government, Whether they will include in the Public Works Bill a provision that when a local body proposes to take gravel out of any land (as provided by section 90, subsection (12), of "The Public Works Act, 1892") the local body shall with the notice furnish the owner of the land with a plan showing the place where it is proposed to take the gravel from; and granting the owner a similar right of objection to the proposal as he would have if such local body proposed to take the fee-simple, but that the appeal should not be to the local body whose action is appealed against? And, if power is given to local bodies to take the fee-simple of land for gravel-pits, will the Government introduce a provision granting leave to the owner to have the appeal heard before a Stipendiary Magistrate?

Mr. SEDDON said that when the Public Works Bill and the Government Railways Bill were in Committee the honourable gentleman would be able to move in the direction indicated.

HASTINGS POST-AND-TELEGRAPH OFFICE.

Captain RUSSELL asked the Postmaster-General, If he will give orders for the immediate erection of a post-and-telegraph office at Hastings, Hawke's Bay, as the temporary premises have proved unsafe as against burglars?

Mr. WARD said that new post-office buildings were not burglar-proof any more than were the temporary premises to which the honourable gentleman referred. However, as far as Hastings was concerned, it was proposed to have new offices established there, provided, of course, that it was authorised in the public-works estimates. That had been, at any rate, the intention for some time.

FOOD AND DRUGS IMPORTED.

Mr. W. HUTCHISON asked the Premier, Will he make provision in the amended Adulteration Bill promised by him whereby Customs officers shall be empowered to ascertain that articles of food and drugs imported into the colony are what on the face of them they profess to be?

Mr. SEDDON said the Adulteration Act Amendment Bill would, he hoped, be re-

committed for the further consideration of clause 2. When the Bill was recommitted it would be for the honourable member to move in the direction indicated in his question. He thought himself something should be done in that direction.

VOLUNTEER DECORATIONS.

Mr. WILLIS asked the Minister of Defence, Whether he will place a small sum on the estimates sufficient to pay the charges made by the Imperial Government for the decorations awarded by it to the long-service Volunteer officers of this colony?

Mr. SEDDON said it was not thought that such a step would be acceptable to the officers who were entitled to this honourable distinction. It was thought that the fact of their having to pay a small sum for the order would in their estimation enhance the value of it.

HOROWHENUA POST-OFFICE.

Mr. PIRANI asked the Postmaster-General, If the Postmastership at Horowhenua will be transferred to a local resident, and the office reopened immediately?

Mr. WARD said it was not intended to reopen the office at this place, but to keep it at Heatherlea. He was informed there were only a small number of settlers at Horowhenua, and the office at Heatherlea would suit the majority best.

Mr. PIRANI wished to point out that the place where the post-office now was was seven miles away from Horowhenua—not in the vicinity at all.

Mr. WARD said he would be glad to make further inquiry.

LOCAL BODIES' LOANS.

Mr. MILLAR asked the Premier, Whether, if the Government will not introduce legislation this session to enable local bodies to convert their loans, they will give special facilities to a private member to do so, and assist him?

Mr. SEDDON said this matter was now under consideration of the Government. There were one or two local Bills on the Order Paper giving power to the special local bodies concerned to convert their loans. The Government would see as to what number of local Bills would be likely to be dealt with, and it would depend on the progress made with the business whether time would be afforded to the House to go on with these Bills. There was one other alternative suggested here—that was, that the Government might bring in a general measure—but in dealing with such a large question as this it behoved the Government to be very careful, and not to commit the colony in any way.

GOVERNMENT RAILWAYS BILL.

ADJOURNED DEBATE.

3.0. Mr. MITCHELSON.—Sir, the Premier, in moving the second reading of this Bill, informed the House that it was one of the most important measures that had been introduced into this Parliament, and that it

dealt with fifteen million pounds' worth of public property. I agree with him that any large question dealing with our railway system is one of considerable importance to the colony, and therefore I also look upon this Bill as one of the most important measures that have been introduced this session. But, in saying that, I cannot agree with the Premier in the proposal to change the management of the railways from that by the Commissioners to control by the State. Judging from the very little interest that has been shown by the speeches that have been made so far as this debate has gone, it would appear that a very large number of members attach very little importance to the question. Before I proceed further I must congratulate the Premier upon the changed tone which he has exhibited during the present discussion, for there is a considerable difference between the speech delivered by him on Friday night when moving the second reading of this Bill and the speech that was delivered by him last year when he introduced the Government Railways Amendment Bill. On that occasion he took nearly two hours to deliver a speech which was a direct personal attack upon members of the Railway Commission; and in his speech the other night, although he disagreed with the system of control by Commissioners, he gave them considerable credit for having managed the railways to the best of their ability. The Premier has been, no doubt, consistent in his opposition to the Government Railways Act and to non-political control. He opposed the Bill when it was introduced into the House by myself in the year 1887, and he has consistently opposed the policy then enunciated ever since that time. But, Sir, under this Bill he now proposes to repeal that Act, and the change he proposes is one which I do not think ought to be allowed to be placed on our statute-book. It is neither one thing nor the other; and, if the House decides in favour of a change, then, I say, by all means let us return to State control rather than allow such a Bill as is proposed by the Premier to be placed upon our statute-book. Under the provisions of this Bill the Commissioners are practically powerless. They are Commissioners in name and not in reality, but simply puppets in the hands of the Minister of Railways; but the Premier has determined to make himself lord of all, and to make himself not only king of the country, but also king of our railway system. It is quite true that the Bill provides for the appointment of three Commissioners, but it also provides that a Minister shall be a Commissioner, with a deliberative vote as well as a casting-vote. If the Bill passes, can the Premier believe for one moment that he will be able to obtain three gentlemen to serve with him as Commissioners under such provisions as are contained in it? He certainly will not obtain any men of spirit to undertake such an anomalous position as it is proposed to give them under the Bill now under discussion. The Premier also told us

that the country had decided at the last election in favour of State control as against control by Commissioners; but I do not think for one moment that the question of State control ever was before the people at all; and, even supposing the country had decided that the State should resume control of our railways, what reason was there for the Government dispensing with the services of the late Commissioners? Surely, if it had been intended that the State should resume the control of our railways, he ought, in fairness to the House and the country, to have retained the whole of the late Commissioners until such time as the House had had an opportunity of dealing with the whole question. It is true that the present Commissioners have only been appointed for nine months, but it would have been more just to have reappointed the old Commissioners for the period named. If this Bill passes it is proposed to appoint three Commissioners from year to year, but I am very doubtful whether either one or the other of the Commissioners now holding office will consent to accept office under such a Bill. The Premier brought forward no argument that satisfied my mind that it was necessary in the interests of the country to change our system of railway management from that of non-political control to that of State control. I think that the change can by no possible means be considered a beneficial one, even if it is given effect to by the present House, and I am convinced that if we revert to State control it will be a huge mistake, which those who now support the change will soon realise. The Premier advanced a number of reasons which he used to influence the House in coming to a conclusion upon this question, and one was that the Post Office, the Public Trust Office, and the Insurance Department were managed directly by the State, and were managed exceedingly well. I must admit that those institutions are, all three of them, exceedingly well managed; but neither of those institutions is troubled with political agitators who live and fatten on the workers in this colony; nor are they dependent upon members of Parliament who, for the purpose of gaining political support, come here practically for the purpose of urging the cases of individuals, without inquiring as to whether the grievances are genuine or not. Those of us who were in the House during the many years of State control of our railways must know the pressure that was brought to bear, not only upon the management of our railways, but also upon Ministers, by members of Parliament to grant concessions, give employment to friends, and do all and sundry things. And the pressure was such that no Minister cared about accepting the position. The Order Paper was always teeming with questions. The Premier has not had experience in the management of the railways under the system then in existence, or he would not be now so anxious to induce the House to agree to the measure he has brought forward. It cannot be denied that there is some dissatisfaction

Mr. Mitchelson

throughout the colony at the present time as to the results of our railway management, but there is nothing like the amount of dissatisfaction now experienced throughout the colony that was experienced when our railways were under State management. It does not matter under whose charge our railways are, whether under the charge of Commissioners or of Government, dissatisfaction always will exist, and no management can be established that will put a stop to dissatisfaction. The public always will make complaints. Now, the Premier the other night, in dealing with the question of the change in the control in 1887, stated that there were only eleven members in the House at the present time who voted upon that question. The second reading of the Bill was carried by a majority of forty-five; and upon the third reading, when the final division was taken, fifty-eight members supported it, and twenty members voted against the third reading. The Premier on that occasion voted against the Bill, and so did the Minister of Lands, who, however, voted for the second reading; but the Hon. Mr. Cadman, the Hon. Mr. Reeves, and the Hon. Mr. Ward supported the second and third readings. Fifteen of those members who supported the Bill in 1887 are now in the House, and seven of the members who opposed the Bill in 1887 are also in the House. So that there are twenty-two members who were in the House in 1887 during the passing of the Government Railways Bill, and not eleven as stated by the Premier. A very large majority of the members who supported the Bill in 1887 did so from their knowledge that the working of the railways during the many years they were under State control had not been a success owing to political pressure and influence; and if honourable members will read the speeches then delivered in the House by the Hon. Mr. Richardson, who was a former Minister for Public Works, and who had a much longer experience than I have ever had in State railway management, and the speeches of Sir Julius Vogel and others, they will find that they all pointed out the intense dissatisfaction that was expressed by users of the railways, as well as by employes, and the necessity that existed for a change to a system of non-political control. I do not know that anything can be said to have changed the circumstances that existed in 1887 and prior to that date; but I am quite satisfied in my own opinion that if we revert to the management of our railways by the State we shall have the same dissatisfaction expressed throughout the colony as we had during the time they were under State control. If we decide to place the management of our railways under the control of unionism, then why not say so?—for, in my opinion, the proposition of the Premier and those supporting him at the present time practically means that our railways are to be controlled by the workers and not by the users. A very large majority—I might almost say the whole of the commercial community, from one end of the colony to the other—are practically satisfied with the present system,

and have expressed no desire for a change; and I am also satisfied that a very large majority of the users of our railways hold exactly the same opinion, and the desire for a change from the management by Commissioners to a system of management by the State does not appear to me to have come either from the commercial community or from a majority of the users of the railways, but simply from the employés on the railways, the workers in the towns, and the city members who practically represent workers. As I have already stated, I am opposed to State control, and I am in favour of control by Commissioners, a purely non-political control, not such as is proposed by the Premier; and I hold that the management by them has been a success, while the control by the State will have the opposite effect. There is no doubt that there has been a considerable amount of dissatisfaction experienced throughout the colony as regards railway rates and charges; but that is no fault of the Commissioners. The Commissioners have to earn a certain amount of revenue in order to be able to assist to a considerable extent in meeting a portion of the interest on the amount expended upon the construction of the lines; and, if the people of this colony desire to see a very large reduction in rates and charges, that can be easily given effect to by a motion moved in this House. If any motion were carried by this House authorising the Commissioners to make a reduction in the present rates for passengers and charges for goods, or to change the railway policy, the Commissioners would give effect to such motion. But honourable members must bear this in mind,—and it appears to me, from what I have seen, that the desire of the people is that the rates and charges should be reduced: If that is done, then the people of the colony must be prepared to be taxed in some other form in order to make up the loss of revenue. There is no doubt whatever, if the rates and charges upon our railways are very largely reduced, further taxation will be necessary to provide the revenue to pay the interest, as the loss to our revenue would be very large. As to the question of rates and charges, that is a matter for the House to consider and decide upon. It is not a question for the Commissioners at all. If this House were to instruct the Commissioners to make reductions, no doubt that would be done. As I said last year, although I am opposed to the Bill as introduced, I am not opposed to the principle of a Minister having a seat upon the Board. I think the Minister should have a seat upon the Board, but certainly he should not have the power which the Premier proposes to give him under this Bill. I think that is a mistake. Neither can I agree with the proposal contained in the Bill with reference to the power of suspending a Commissioner. I say that the fault of the management of the railways in Victoria and New South Wales has been to some extent owing to similar conditions to those contained in this Bill,—far too much political and Ministerial interference. As regards suspending Commis-

sioners, under the original Act ample powers are given to suspend them until Parliament has had an opportunity of dealing with the matter. I think it would be a very great mistake for the House to allow such drastic provisions as are contained in this Bill regarding the suspension of the Commissioners to become law, and I do not think it possible that an individual with any self-respect can well accept office as a Commissioner under such provisions as are in the Bill.

Mr. SEDDON.—Taken from the Victorian Act.

Mr. MITCHELSON.—The honourable gentleman told us the other night that the system was found to be a mistake there: but I shall deal with that presently. He also proposes to take from the Commissioners the power to take land for railway purposes. Under the present Act the Commissioners have not power to take land other than land that may be required for opened lines. They have no power to take land for railways under construction. The Premier made a great deal of the point while dealing with this question as to the enormous amount of land which has been taken in the past for the purposes of our railways. That land has since been leased, and brings in a revenue of some £18,000 per annum. The present Commissioners, so far as I am able to understand, have not acquired any great extent of land at all, if, indeed, any; and it must be borne in mind that the revenue derived from the lands mentioned by the Premier should not be considered territorial revenue, as the Premier would like to treat it. It should be regarded as railway revenue pure and simple, as the money paid for the land has been taken from loan and properly charged to the cost of the construction of the lines, and consequently this revenue becomes part and parcel of the railway revenue. Well, no doubt in some districts a larger area of land has been acquired than was absolutely necessary at the time it was taken. The officers who had charge of the railways at that time considered that it was possible that the time would come when extensions would have to be made,—and possibly they may yet have to be made, and the land would then be necessary. The land was bought in the early days, when land was cheap, and it is very possible that the best bargain was made which could be made at that time. The Bill also proposes to take from the Commissioners the right to choose station-sites. I think the Commissioners are the proper persons to choose these sites, as they are responsible for the safety of the public and for the economical working of the lines. If the power is given into the hands of the Minister, as the Premier proposes, the political element will at once be introduced—the political element which was taken away in 1887. If we are again to go in for large railway construction, then the owners of land will endeavour to bring pressure on the Minister to establish station-sites suitable for them, rather than in the interests of the public or of the running of the trains. This simply appears to be another

attempt to introduce the political element and obtain more patronage. Then, again, under the Act of 1887—the original Act—it is provided that the estimates prepared by the Commissioners should be submitted as the Governor directs. There is ample power there given to the Minister or the Government to refuse their estimates.

Mr. SEDDON.—It is only in such form as the Governor directs.

Mr. MITCHELSON.—Did you ever send estimates back for revision?

Mr. SEDDON.—Yes.

Mr. MITCHELSON.—Well, did the Commissioners ever refuse to bring them down in the way prescribed? In the Act of 1887 there is ample power given to the Minister to refuse absolutely to bring the estimates down to this House unless they are brought down in the manner prescribed by the Governor. The honourable gentleman proposes also to take from the Commissioners the power to let contracts for supplies for railway requirements, without calling for public tenders, for any amount exceeding £100. While dealing with this question he referred to the case of Victoria, where great evils and abuses have occurred in connection with the letting of contracts; and he gave the Commissioners in this colony credit for the manner in which they have conducted and let out their contracts, and he said the same thing did not apply in New Zealand as it did in Victoria. I may point out, however, that the Railway Commissioners have not let any contract for supplies for any amount over £20 without calling for tenders; and that remark applies to both this colony and Victoria.

Mr. SEDDON.—Yes; they introduced two locomotive boilers without any tenders at all.

Mr. MITCHELSON.—I totally disagree with that part of the Bill which gives to one branch of the Legislature power to pass a motion requesting the Governor, by Order in Council, to hand the control of the railways over to the Government. I say that is an insult to the other branch of the Legislature. The Bill says that a resolution of one branch of the Legislature may effect this, but I say that anything of that sort should be dealt with by both branches of the Legislature, not by a single branch. The Premier has stated that one of the principal reasons which he had for asking the House to make a change in the management of our railways was the safety of the public, and also the promotion of settlement. One would imagine from that that the public were not safe under the *régime* of the Commissioners, and that the promotion of settlement had been retarded by the policy carried on by them. He also stated that the Commissioners had the power of crushing the industries of the country. I do not think he can—I suppose he will tell us in his reply if that is so—give a single instance of an industry which had been crushed by the action of the Railway Commissioners. He also stated that the policy of the Railway Commissioners—both the past and the present Commissioners

—has been a huge failure. I do not consider that anything of the kind has been the case. I think, so long as this House or the colony expects the Commissioners to obtain a certain amount of revenue, it cannot be said that the policy of the last five years has been anything else than a great success. He also stated that the trial of the Commissioners in the other colonies has been a huge mistake. I think the honourable member for Hawke's Bay, in his speech, replying to a similar statement, showed clearly that they had not been such a failure in other colonies as the Premier tried to represent. The Premier also urged that the people demanded a change. The only question that I can remember coming before the country during the elections was, whether the Ministry should be represented upon the Board of Commissioners. The question of the resumption of State control was not before the public at all. I do not think the honourable gentleman can say that the employees upon our railways are not in a better condition now than they were in 1887. I myself fully believe that the railway employees at the present time are in a much more satisfactory position and contented condition than they were in while the railways were under the management of the State. I do not think that can be denied.

Mr. SEDDON.—That cannot be correct if you believe what Sir Robert Stout told you.

Mr. MITCHELSON.—That is a point which I have taken a note of, and I say that the charge made by Sir Robert Stout is one which the Ministry should have inquired into, because I say, if the statements made by him are true, then the Commissioner who was a party to that transaction ought no longer to be allowed to retain the position which he now holds.

Mr. SEDDON.—I will deal with that in my reply.

Mr. MITCHELSON.—Comparing the railways at the present time with what they were five years ago, we find the following has been accomplished: Speed has been accelerated, heavier rails have been laid down, grades flattened, curves straightened, and very large improvements made in the rolling-stock; and this has to a very large extent, if not totally so, been effected out of revenue. Very large reductions have also been made in the rates charged for passengers and for the carriage of goods. The average amount of revenue which has been lost through the reductions which have been made since the advent of the Commissioners comes to about £50,000 per annum—£20,000 reduction in passenger-fares and £30,000 in the charges for the carriage of goods. Reductions have been made upon the carriage of coal, timber, lime, fencing, agricultural produce, building-materials, *et cetera*; and the rates chargeable now for passengers under the commutation tickets only amount to $\frac{3}{4}$ d. a mile first class and $\frac{1}{4}$ d. per mile second class. Then, since 1889, 171 miles of railway have been opened, and the whole of the revenue from half that extension has been absolutely absorbed in working-expenses. The net profit has increased from £350,000 to £437,000.

Mr. Mitchelson

and the expenditure has decreased from 64·86 to 62·70 per cent. The net profit per train-mile has increased from 2s. 6d. to 2s. 9½d. In conclusion, I once more inform the House that I shall oppose the Bill in its present form, as also I shall oppose anything in the direction of the resumption by the State of the management of our railways.

Mr. BUICK.—I have much to say upon this question, and little time to say it in. Therefore I do not propose to refer to the speech of the honourable member for Eden: suffice to admit that I agree with almost every word of his remarks which I have heard. Now, I wish to say something about the question before the House. The Premier, in introducing this Bill, was good enough to say that this was a measure designed for the purpose of restoring to the people of New Zealand the control of their railways. I regret that I cannot view the measure in that light, because I regard it as a Bill designed for the purpose of handing the New Zealand railways over to the control of the

3.30. Premier; and, if any one presumes to suppose that this is synonymous with restoring lost privileges to the people, then all I can say is that those persons have a very poor perception of the proclivities of the Premier. Sir, what does this Bill propose? In the first place, it proposes to abolish the present system of railway management by Commissioners, as we have known it for the last five years and nine months, which, in spite of all the opposition and abuse which it has received, has, in my opinion, worked with infinite credit to the Commissioners and with profit to the colony. However, Sir, that system is to be abolished, and another system is to be substituted for it, which is such a lame cross between Ministerial control and officialdom that no living soul upon earth can tell where responsibility begins and where it ends. And the result of this hybrid complication of authority will be that neither the House nor the country will be able to tell who is responsible for all the mismanagement that must of necessity take place under it. The Minister will be able to say that the Commissioners outvoted him; the Commissioners will be able to say that the Minister interfered with them; and between these conflicting interests the whole question of railway management—or, rather, mismanagement—will be simply shrouded in maze and mystery. From a condition of comparative quiet and commercial success, the business of our railways will be plunged into a condition of chaos and uncertainty. Fares and freights will fluctuate according as the Minister or the Commissioners are in the ascendant, and this degrading conflict will go on until such time as the Minister can get a set of Commissioners sufficiently pliable to invariably surrender their authority to the influence of his unbending will. Sir, that we may anticipate many changes in the *personnel* of the Commissioners before we reach this degraded level is only natural, because what has taken place in other colonies will undoubtedly take place here, and we have only to examine the see-saw policy adopted

by Victoria, and the disastrous results following from it in this connection, to afford ourselves a valuable and interesting object-lesson on that subject. But, instead of Ministers profiting by the example of other colonies, they seem only too anxious to follow in their footsteps. Now, as I read this Bill, a Minister of the Crown—that is, the Premier, I suppose—is to become a member of the Board of railway management. He is to be Chairman of that Board, and he is to have a deliberative vote and a casting-vote. That means to say that the Minister has only to get one weak Commissioner to go with him, and then the whole question of railway management is entirely at his disposal; and so soon as that position is arrived at, then we shall find political influence and intrigue at work. Sir, we have already had an indication this session of what that is likely to be. Day after day questions have been put upon the Order Paper demanding concessions here and concessions there; and as soon as the Minister gets the upper hand we may expect to see the honourable member for Tuapeka demanding a reduction of freights on grain; the honourable member for Riccarton will be demanding that policemen on leave of absence shall be carried throughout the colony for nothing; we shall have the honourable member for Oamaru demanding that Oamaru stone shall be carried for next to nothing; and the Minister of Lands will be demanding that the same concessions with regard to carriage shall be given to the people of Hampden and Palmerston as are now given to the people of Oamaru. And, Sir, it only requires a sufficient number of members with axes of this kind to grind when the bottom will be knocked completely out of our railway finances; and not only will financial disaster be the result, but injustice will be introduced into the question, because those provinces which are powerful owing to the numerical strength of their members, such as Canterbury, Auckland, and Otago, will be able to extract concessions out of the Government which no other part of the colony will be able to obtain, and the consequence will be that we shall have a resurrection of the old scandal of differential rates existing throughout the colony. The provinces which are weak owing to their inferior size—such as Marlborough and Nelson, for instance—will have to pay heavy charges in order to compensate for the concessions granted to other parts of the colony. Now, I believe that the effect and result of this injustice will be to cause a revulsion of public feeling, and, as democratic government is but a series of oscillations,—to-day the pendulum swings this way, to-morrow it returns,—so in a few years this Parliament will be called upon to re-enact the reform which was made when the Commissioners were first appointed. Now, Sir, I do not doubt the honesty and sincerity of those who are supporting this Bill, and those who are clamouring for a return of the railways to political control. At the same time, I must say that I consider that to a large extent they lose sight of the

practical and banker after the sentimental phase of the question. They lay great stress upon the necessity for parliamentary control; but I would remind them of this: that in years past Parliament controlled the railways, and from one end of the colony to the other it was unanimously voted that Parliament had made an ignominious mess of the whole business. And, Sir, judging by the way that we do our work in the matter of passing Acts, I should say you could scarcely find any institution more incompetent to manage the railways than Parliament itself. Why, Sir, every year we have to amend Acts passed only in the previous session, and sometimes we have to amend them in the same session as that in which they were originally passed. I ask, could we afford to muddle things in this way in connection with the railways?—and yet muddle there assuredly would be so soon as Parliament had a finger in the pie. For what expert knowledge has Parliament on the subject? One or two honourable gentlemen may understand the question, but the great majority of us know nothing at all about it. I ask honourable members not to be vain upon this matter. I ask them not to be misled by the magnitude of their own superiority. I ask them to admit what is the fact, that in the past Parliament has managed the railways and failed in the attempt. And therefore I say, having no guarantee that Parliament can manage our railways any better than it used to do, why should this, the most valuable asset we have got for all our borrowed millions, be handed over to an institution that admittedly knows nothing at all about the subject? Sir, it may be all very well to sit down and worship democracy, but I say we should first sit down and count the cost. Now, Sir, supposing it was undeniably advisable that the railways should be handed over to parliamentary control, what we have to consider is this: Does this Bill give us this power? I say it does not. But what it does is this: Behind the shield and under the shelter of the Commissioners it will enable a Minister of the Crown to dominate the whole situation; and that is all the people will know about it. The whole essence of the Bill is contained in clause 10. Under that clause the Minister for the time being may demand of the Commissioners that they shall supply him with a scheme for the reduction of the expenditure and the increasing of the revenue. If their scheme is not agreeable to his mind, then he may supply one of his own, and both schemes are to be considered at a meeting of the Commissioners and the Minister called for that purpose, but, if the Minister has no desire to treat the Commissioners fairly, then all he has to do is to raise a difference of opinion on the subject, and the whole matter is taken out of their hands and settled by the Governor in Council, which, of course, means the Government in Council. The policy of the railways, then, is taken away from the Commissioners: they are totally ignored and set aside, and the country has the privilege of pay-

Mr. Buick

ing them for doing next to nothing. If the action of the Government is challenged in this House, then we know what will happen. The Premier has only to get up and say, "This is a policy measure, this is a party question, and if the Government are defeated the House will go to the country." You are threatened with all the terrors of a dissolution, and members, under that influence, will consider whether it is worth while to vote against the Government. While they are under this influence the whip is cracked, and the division will be taken. In this way the railways will be managed by the people. I say, from the bottom of my heart, God forbid that any such management should take place in New Zealand! And yet I fail to see how it is to be prevented if this Bill becomes law. Now, I also fail to see why the claims of the democracy are not sufficiently met even in the present situation. For, as I understand the theory of the democracy, it is this: that every individual in the State shall have a direct voice in the management of the State. Each unit of the State becomes a ruler almost invested with the powers of sovereignty: in fact, one man is as good as another. Therefore, if we follow that theory out to its logical conclusion, it means this: that every man and woman in the State should have a direct voice in the management of our railways. But we know that for practical purposes such a thing is utterly absurd and unworkable; therefore the democracy gets over the difficulty by delegating its authority to agents—the agents in this case being the Parliament. Now, if Parliament were capable of managing the railways profitably and practically, then the whole situation from the democratic point of view would, to my mind, be perfectly met; but I repeat again that Parliament in the past has failed to govern the railways successfully, and therefore Parliament has got over this difficulty by again delegating its authority to agents, the agents in this case being the Railway Commissioners; therefore so long as we maintain a reasonable control over our Commissioners the democratic position is completely met by the present position. And I contend that the present system would be an infinitely better system of management than a purely democratic control, or a purely parliamentary control, and I am certain that it would be a much superior system to this absurd combination of everything and nothing which we have propounded in this Bill. Now, Sir, I will again refer to the Bill. In my opinion there is one good clause in this Bill, and only one. That is the provision for setting up a Board of Appeal, at which the employees upon the railways will have a chance of having their grievances fairly and honourably considered. That, Sir, I think is an excellent proposal, but to my mind the good effect of that proposal is largely modified by the fact that the Minister has the right of veto over the decision of the Commissioners. The principle itself is good, and I think on that account both sides of the House would heartily agree with it. For that reason it is a pity that it was not introduced years ago, and I

think it is also a pity that so good a principle should have been combined with so bad a Bill, because the iniquity in other portions of the Bill is such that I am certain the good in this clause cannot compensate for it. As for the other clauses of the Bill, I shall not attempt to criticize them in detail. I will say this, however: that they seem to be wholly designed for the purpose of giving the Government of the day an immense amount of power and patronage without any corresponding responsibility. At all events, I will just say this about one clause—that is, clause 4: I do not know that I ever in all my experience—which certainly is not very large—I do not know that I have ever seen anything more unfair to any one than what is contained in clause 4 of this Bill. Under that clause the Minister of the day may suspend any Commissioner from his office for inability, inefficiency, mismanagement, or misbehaviour, of which, of course, the Minister is to be the sole judge. That means this: that upon the mere whim of the Minister a Commissioner may be driven out of office, and yet it requires the vote of one House of Parliament to restore him to that position. Now, I say this is very unfair and unequal. As for Parliament protecting the Commissioners, that is all very well. I do not doubt for a moment that the House would do justice if it thoroughly understood the question. But there are so many ways of preventing the House from thoroughly understanding a question; and we have already had one instance this session of how the Ministry would use party influence to obtain the sanction of the House to a very questionable transaction. Not only is this section unfair, but it seems to me to be absolutely contradictory, for I presume this clause was put in the Bill to make the people believe they were to have a voice in the dismissal of the Commissioners through their representatives in Parliament.

Mr. SEDDON.—It is taken from the Victorian Act.

Mr. BUICK.—That does not make it any better, to my mind. But the power supposed to be given to the people in the colony is, to my mind, directly negatived by the introduction of the Legislative Council into the matter; for the position is this: The Ministry might dismiss the Commissioners from office, and this House might be unanimous in the opinion that the Commissioners should be dismissed. We who represent the people might then refuse to pass a resolution or to present a petition to the Governor demanding the retention of the Commissioners; but the Legislative Council, on the other hand, which in no sense represents the people, might take an opposite view of the question, and they would override us, who are in every sense representatives of the people. So that, I say, this clause seems to be both unfair and contradictory; and I believe the Government, in their extreme desire to make the people believe they are getting something that they are not getting, are simply playing the fool with the whole question. Sir, until this Bill was introduced I, for one, was

under the impression that Ministers were overworked and underpaid; but, apparently, the Premier does not share in that opinion, because he is evidently very anxious to add the enormous responsibility of railway management to his already multifarious duties, and did I not think that I could fathom the ideas of the honourable gentleman on the subject I might be surprised at his action. But I believe, myself, that the motive behind the Government in this matter is not so much one of patriotism as of patronage. They seem to be labouring under the hallucination that patronage is a power to a Government. My opinion is a very different one. Far from being a power, it is a great source of weakness; and I should say that, in a country like New Zealand, where so many people are Liberals simply for what they can get out of it, patronage is an exceedingly dangerous weapon to play with. And if the Government think they are going to strengthen their position by the stock of patronage that would fall to their lot by the control of the railways they will be very much mistaken in the actual results. At all events, if they satisfy one, they must offend at least twenty. Under these circumstances, I cannot understand how it comes that the Premier is anxious to acquire so much power in a small country like this. I should have thought that his achievements in that direction already were more than sufficient to satisfy the appetite of the most abandoned gourmand. But, apparently, with the Premier it is not so, for, like Oliver Twist, he hungers and asks for more. Few people, I believe, can really appreciate the full extent of the power the Premier of the colony has at the present time, and I can only give a very rough idea of it when I say that in his official capacity he has control over more than fifty thousand people. And yet, with the blandness of a Mongolian, he now asks this House to place an additional 4,800 railway servants at his mercy! Now, what I want to know is this: Where is this growing autocracy going to end? What limit is this acquisition of power going to have?—because I observe that, not being satisfied with his elevated position as the great Pooh Bah of the colony, the Premier now proposes to annex Samoa, and become a modified edition of the King of the Cannibal Islands. I should have liked to say a great deal about the question urged with regard to the tyrannical behaviour of the Commissioners towards their employes. I shall, however, only quote the remarks of two honourable gentlemen who have always been opposed to the Commissioners, and therefore would not be expected to say anything unnecessarily favourable of them. I refer to the honourable member for Dunedin City (Mr. Earnshaw) and the honourable member for Invercargill. At a meeting of railway servants those gentlemen both made speeches on this phase of the question, and are reported in the *Post* to have said this:—

“Messrs. Kelly and Earnshaw gave a short address, both gentlemen giving it as their opinion that the present Commis-

sioners were anxious to promote the interests of railway employes as far as lay in their power. Many grievances amongst railway men lay not so much in any fault of the Commissioners past or present, as in those in direct authority over the men. However, since the present Commissioners had held office this petty tyranny had to a great extent ceased to exist, which augured well, not only as far as railway men were concerned, but for the Commissioners and the people in general."

This I take to be a complete vindication of the charge made against the Commissioners of tyrannical conduct, and those honourable gentlemen have placed their hands on the right shoulders when they say the fault was at the door of those in petty authority over the men. That is the source of a great deal of the trouble, and, that being the case, it is hardly fair to accuse the Commissioners of the faults of those who, being subordinates, still cannot have every action of theirs controlled and supervised. Now, speaking of the discipline on the railways, I say that, in my opinion, this Bill will undermine the whole discipline upon the railways, because it will allow this: As soon as political influence is brought into the question those who have, or who fancy they have, a grievance, will do their utmost with members and Ministers to have all the political influence brought to bear on their case that can be brought to bear, and the consequence will be that many men will be less disposed to obey that strict and regular discipline in the railway service which is absolutely necessary for the public safety. Ministers will not only be worried, and members will not only be worried, by people asking for influence in this way, but day after day we shall have discussions in the House as to why the Minister did or did not uphold the decision of the appeal Commissioners in this or that particular case. It may also be that some unscrupulous employes will have a tendency to violate the rules of the service, simply in the hope that they and their friends will have sufficient political influence to have the thing overlooked when they are brought to account. So that if this sort of thing comes about, and I believe it will, all order and discipline on the railways will be completely undermined, and this, the most important branch of the public service, will simply fall a prey to the selfish designs of unprincipled agitators. I cannot take up the time of the House longer; therefore I wish to say, in conclusion, that, although I oppose this Bill strongly,—and I hope I have opposed it strongly,—I have not done so out of any wanton opposition to the Government. I have done so because, Sir, I honestly and sincerely believe that, if this Bill is passed, or if the railways return to political control, it will do infinite harm both to the country and to the Government. Ever since the Premier made this proposal I have been opposed to it openly and avowedly. Therefore if my conduct has not the merit of novelty it at least has the merit of consistency, and no one need be very much surprised at the tone of my speech to-

Mr. Buick

day. Personally, I am strongly in favour of control by Commissioners pure and simple. I admit that the Commissioners have not managed to satisfy every one, but it is unreasonable to suppose that any one in charge of so large a department as the New Zealand railways could hope to please every one: indeed, I should be very suspicious about the management if they did succeed in pleasing every one. At the same time, I believe that if the question were put to be decided by those who use the railways they would unanimously decide in favour of control by Commissioners as against political control.

Hon. MEMBERS.—No, no.

Mr. BUICK.—That is my opinion. At all events, if a change is to be made let it be a reasonable change; and, as a compromise, I, at all events, am prepared to go as far as to put a Minister on the Board with two Commissioners, giving him no unnecessary power. What I object to in this Bill is that it gives the Minister such enormous power to do a great deal of mischief without a corresponding responsibility. That is what I object to. The policy of this Bill is too indefinite: in fact, there is hardly any policy in it. The Minister has all the real power, but the Commissioners are retained as a buffer—they are nothing else—between the Minister and Parliament. Had a proposal been made to abolish the Commissioners openly and straightforwardly, then we should have had something definite to go upon—we should then have known whom to look to as the responsible manager of the railways; but in this Bill the responsibility is simply like a coin spinning in the air, no one can tell which is heads and which is tails. In conclusion, I hope there has been nothing ambiguous in my remarks. I hope I have made it perfectly clear that I have not now, and never have had, any sympathy with or any faith in this Bill, and I must urge my want of faith in the measure as my justification for opposing it at every stage.

Mr. WILLIS.—Sir, I cannot say I agree with the remarks which have fallen from the honourable member for Wairau. His statements of the terrible calamities that are going to come over the colony as soon as the control of the railways is resumed by the Government are absolutely without foundation. It seems to me the fault in the past has been that the Commissioners have not sufficiently studied the original intention with which the railways were constructed. The object was to open as far as possible the interior of this colony for communication, by means of which industries would be encouraged, by which produce might be brought at a very cheap rate to market, and by which a very much improved system of rates could be established. The honourable member for Wairau mentioned several members of this House who had particular complaints with regard to certain industries in their own districts. I have no doubt those honourable members will have sufficient to say to prove the necessity for a change in the management. The honourable member for

Eden asked the question if any particular industry had, up to the present time, been injured or destroyed through the present system of railway management. We have again and again in my own district pointed out that large sums of money are being lost by the refusal of the Commissioners to assist in the export of white-pine timber. We have been very persistent in our endeavours to help this industry, because it means the profitable use of thousands of acres of land which at the present time are perfectly useless,

4.0. and would be the means of giving employment to large numbers of men who are now idle. But, as a matter of fact, to show how the Commissioners have acted in regard to the freight on white-pine, I may say that firewood is charged, between Wanganui and Taonui, at the rate of £1 14s. 6d. per truck, or 5s. 9d. per ton. The endeavour made by us was to get white-pine carried at the same rate as firewood. If that had been allowed we should have been able to have a very large trade that is now entirely destroyed, and the timber that at the present time is rotting on the ground would have been exported in considerable quantities. The rate we are now paying for white-pine is equal to 9s. 11d., as against 5s. 9d. which is charged for firewood. Why the Commissioners have so persistently refused to reduce white-pine to the same level as firewood has been a puzzle to us. The Commissioners, Sir, are not what may be called commercial men. They are men who have been selected not for their knowledge in this respect, as two out of three are mechanical engineers, who no doubt, in their own line, may be looked upon as very excellent men, but with limited commercial experience. I consider that the question of railways should be looked upon as a matter of very great importance indeed, and that as far as possible they should be the means of assisting in bringing produce of all kinds to our ports at a cheap rate. When we hear of traction-engines running in large numbers in Canterbury, when we hear of wool being carried by drays at a price the railway authorities actually refuse to take, it seems as if there was a determination that they will not use ordinary common-sense and bring produce down at a price equal to what private enterprise is able to do. It seems to me as if the Railway Commissioners had looked upon the railways purely from a commercial point of view. They have not looked upon them in the light they should have done, and in view of the purpose for which they were started, which was as far as possible to open up communication in the simplest and cheapest way, so as to assist industries and cheapen the cost of production. I do not wish to say much more. I wished to point out this question with regard to white-pine timber. That has been, with us, a source of very great dissatisfaction, and I consider this is only one of a very large number of industries that are being treated in the same way by the Commissioners. Before sitting down I would say that when we waited on the Commissioners to ask for a reduction, and pointed out the

large amount of labour that would be employed if they would agree to it, the reply given by them was, "That is not a question for us to deal with; it is a question of policy, and it rests with yourselves. We have to do with the general management of the railways, and as far as possible to see that they pay." That was the answer they gave us; and that very answer is the reason why the State should resume the control of these railways, so that it should be in a position, in matters of this kind, to say whether it is not for the best interests of the colony that these questions shall receive the fullest amount of consideration.

Mr. MORRISON.—In rising to say a few words in connection with the measure before the House this afternoon I should like to make this statement here: that any remarks I may make in connection with this Bill now before us I do not wish to be taken in any way in a personal sense. I am not going to attack the past or the present Commissioners individually, but I certainly am going to attack the system under which those Commissioners are working; and I lay down this as a guiding principle in connection with the remarks I am going to make: that true representation of the people must be by having full control of the officers who are appointed to any position working under the State; and I say that in the past the people have had no control over the Commissioners. I admit that in 1887 the Railways Bill was introduced for the purpose of appointing Commissioners, and it was supported in a large measure by the representatives of the people, who felt that they were anxious to get that political pressure removed which was brought to bear sometimes to the detriment of the service, which was acting injuriously towards the railway system: and the Bill was introduced for the purpose of remodeling our railways, and getting trained railway experts imported from the Old Country. I say the representatives of the people had no intimation, when this Bill was brought into effect, that the Commissioners were going to be appointed from inside the colony. It was found, after due inquiry and careful advertising, that men could not be got at the money we offered. The result was that they were appointed from inside the colony. The people have found during the last five years that they have been ruled by a Board of irresponsible Commissioners, who had laid down certain drastic rules for their guidance, and who insisted on observing such rules up to the strict letter, whether for the advantage of the colony or not. Now, I say the colony is justified in wishing to resume control of their own affairs. I should like to answer some of the contentions which have been raised by honourable members who have preceded me. I regret the honourable member for Wairau is not in his place, for I am sure his was what may be termed as carefully compiled a gallery speech as I have listened to for some considerable time. There was really nothing in it of what may be termed good, sound argument; but it consisted simply of this: "What is this

growing autocracy coming to? What is the Premier coming to? He already possesses the control of fifty thousand people, and, like the great Pooh Bah, and with a face like a bland Mongolian, he cries for more." If that is argument, it is not what I should term argument. Now, the honourable gentleman stated that the reason why the Government supported a measure of this description was that they wanted an unlimited command of patronage. Well, I can only say this: that if the Bill were passed into law to-morrow, and the Premier had full Ministerial control of the railways without expert assistants, I say, God help him; he would be in his grave in two years. I have no great feeling with regard to what I am saying. I am not envying the Premier in his new position. Although I do not approve of the Bill as brought down, my opinion with regard to the proper mode of putting our railways in order would be this: To appoint two Commissioners, two gentlemen as managers—one for the North Island and one for the South Island; give them full control over every department in their respective Islands; appoint a Minister, having full Ministerial control, that Minister to take full charge and be responsible to this House. He would be responsible to the country, and would see that these managers did their duty on the line of policy laid down by this House, and then laid down by him to the Commissioners. Then, I say, by a system somewhat similar to that—by appointing two Commissioners, with a Minister in charge—you would do away with this cry about political patronage which has been raised at the present moment with regard to the Premier wishing to bring about a change in our present management, and it would go far towards allaying the public anxiety in connection with railway matters. A question has been raised as between our present Commissioners and our past Commissioners, and it has been said that the past management was a pronounced success. Well, I am not prepared to say that the past Commissioners' term of office was an unqualified success. I admit they did their duty fairly well. I admit, seeing the conditions under which they were appointed, and that it was a matter of expediency—I admit that under the circumstances and under the line of policy they were supposed to bring into effect—and that was to get as much revenue out of the railways as possible—they did fairly well under the circumstances. But it is our duty not to place the Commissioners in a false position. If we say to them, "We look to you to encourage our growing industries; we look to you to promote settlement throughout the land; and we are not at all anxious whether our railways return 2, 3, or 4 per cent." If you lay down a policy of that kind, and let the Commissioners understand the position, then, if they do not carry out what they are told to do, you can find fault with them; but to say that they are bound to insist upon getting the last farthing out of the railways, upon getting all the revenue they can, and then

Mr. Morrison

taunt them with the fact that they are retarding settlement—I say it is unfair to the Commissioners, and not a manly course for this House to pursue. Now, another statement has been made with regard to the Commissioners. I do not agree with them entirely, because I think they carried on a system of cheeseparing for the purpose of bringing about this financial result, which they were really appointed to carry into effect. At the present moment you can carry goods to Invercargill and back again to Gore cheaper than you can take them to Gore direct. That is an anomaly that should not be existing in our present railway system. That goods can be carried to a station forty or fifty miles past Gore and brought back again to Gore at less money than you can send them for direct to Gore is an anomaly that should not be under our present system. And I know that in the locomotive department engines have not been getting that necessary rest and overhauling they ought to get; and, instead of running their usual life,—for engines have a life, like other things,—they will be worn out two or three years earlier than they should be, by this wretchedly strict economy that has been practised. And the same cheeseparing policy has permeated through all branches of the railway service. Where men were formerly employed and got 6s. 6d. a day, boys only are now employed. Boy-labour has been introduced, and the wages reduced. The wages of men who have been receiving £2 and £3 a week downwards have been screwed down to the lowest living limit, while men receiving £200 and £300 a year and upwards have been given increases. I say that that is not a fair way in which to conduct our railways. Another system they have in vogue in some of the larger centres is this: that they employ what are termed casual hands, and these casual hands are engaged for about three, six, or nine months before they are given permanent employment, at the end of which period they may expect to get a rise of sixpence a day. It is generally found, however, that at the end of this period the services of these particular casual hands are no longer required, and they get their discharge; and another lot of new casual hands are taken on in their place, so that they can work out their probationary term. Then, the first lot of men, after a month's spell, are taken back on condition that they start to work a further probationary period at the same pay as before. Now, Sir, it is this cheeseparing, niggardly economy which is practised towards these men that has raised such a feeling of indignation in the public mind with regard to the railways. The Commissioners, I believe, are blamed rather unjustly in connection with this. I believe the late Commissioners—gentlemen for whom I have the highest regard, and one or two of whom I have known ever since I came to the colony—have been blamed for a large number of these things unjustly. But what I believe we may blame the Commissioners for is for allowing the heads of the department so to manipulate those things under their

particular management as to place the Commissioners in a false position. The Commissioners should have examined these matters, and should have rectified them as far as possible. Not doing that is what I particularly blame them for. Just another case in point. I know what has happened down South. I know a main station down there where from £60 to £100 a week was received for a number of years from a mineral yard, and I know that that place has been allowed to go to wrack and ruin. I know that no metal has been placed in the yard for upwards of two years. I know also that strong representations had been made to the heads of the department as to the state of things there,—that the yard was a lagoon in wet weather, and in dry weather a sea of dust,—and yet not one shilling has been spent on it; and it was not until representations were made to the heads of the department within the last two or three months, since the new Commissioners have been appointed, that the matter has been remedied. That is the result of simply carrying out this system that has been laid down for the railways of making them pay, and making them pay it does not matter who suffers. I have a large number of notes before me, but unfortunately I do not think I can refer to them all. I have just one particular statement to mention, and that is with regard to a remark which fell from the honourable member for Wellington City (Sir R. Stout). He states that the management of the past Commissioners has been entirely unsatisfactory, and that the present Commissioners have been furnished with a list of names, what might be termed “a black-list,” which was drawn up by trades-unions, some to be discharged and others to be promoted, and this list of names was submitted to the present Commissioners, and if they followed it they would be establishing what was termed a “Star Chamber” in connection with the railways. I assure the House, speaking personally, that I have had no knowledge of anything of the kind being done in the southern parts of the colony, and I believe that nothing of the kind has been done in any part of the colony, and to me it just shows the way in which the honourable gentleman has been imposed upon by some individual, who, knowing his kind and generous nature, has approached him with a story of this description; for if these statements were examined I do not think there would be any ground found for the serious charge which the honourable gentleman has made. And, Sir, while I am saying this, still knowing the source from which it emanated, it raises in my mind a doubt with regard to the accuracy of these statements, seeing that the honourable gentleman did make somewhat similar statements on the floor of the House two or three weeks ago, and had to withdraw them. Therefore I am afraid his information in this particular case is entirely incorrect: in fact, I really do not think the Railway Commissioners, either past or present, would lend themselves to anything of the kind. Now, there was another matter

raised with regard to this Ministerial control, and that was in connection with Parliament—that Parliament had not the necessary knowledge for running our railways. Well, I would ask in connection with this, has Parliament got the necessary knowledge to run any branch of the public service of which they have control? I say, No. When we want expert knowledge we employ an expert in any particular branch; and it is just the same with our railways. If we require an expert in engineering we employ one, and we pay him, and expect to receive from him his report accordingly. We run the Post and Telegraph Department by experts, but, still, under the control of the Minister; and I say we should run our railways under direct Ministerial control, and by appointing two managers or two Commissioners, with full control over the two Islands, under the control of the Minister, and with the Minister directly responsible to the House. I say that that would go far to put our railways in a satisfactory position. Of course, there is just this other point that may be taken in connection with the matter: that political pressure may be brought to bear on the Minister by what may be termed the partisans of the present Government, and that that may be the means of pitchforking into the service a lot of men who are utterly unfit for performing the duties of the position. Well, I do not know that that charge can be levelled at our present Minister for Public Works, for I think he is too strong a man. As a rule, Ministries come and go, and it does not necessarily follow that the present Ministry, who are in office to-day, are always going to be in office; so that, if there is any force in the argument advanced by several honourable members, it applies with as great force to other Governments as to the present Ministry. And I do not think that any Minister would lend himself to this political pressure which might be brought to bear. But I say, under this Bill, as at present drafted, you will simply have the Commissioners acting as a buffer, and they would be simply tools in the hands of a Minister to manipulate for his own ends. What we should try to do is rather to reorganize our railways and place them on a proper foundation. The first point is to properly classify the employes. Have two managers or Commissioners, and give the Minister control over them, and give them full control in their turn over the railways—one manager for each Island—and you would then find that these officers would say to any unscrupulous Minister who wished to pitchfork into the service men who were unfitted for the position, “Look here, I do not want my service loaded with men of this description. If you cannot find another place to put them in, for Goodness’ sake do not place me in the position of running railways with men of this sort.” Now, Sir, my last serious charge against the Railway Commissioners is this: The Railway Commissioners took up their duties in 1888, and some honourable gentlemen have said that they have been an unqualified success. I should like to ask those honourable

gentlemen this: Have these Commissioners, since 1888, introduced one innovation into the railway service which is to the advantage of the public?

An Hon. MEMBER.—No.

Mr. MORRISON.—They have not introduced one single thing.

An Hon. MEMBER.—They have reduced the rates.

Mr. MORRISON.—Yes, Sir; they have reduced the rates by reducing the workmen's wages.

An Hon. MEMBER.—No.

Mr. MORRISON.—I know better. I tell you they have reduced the rates on some lines; but they have had a larger population and a larger mileage, and yet we know they have not shown an increased return. And then, look at the niggardly, cheeseparing economy they have practised all over the colony. Look at our railway-bridges. I can take you to bridges in this colony where, although it is laid down in engineering works that the bolts ought to be oiled, painted, unscrewed, and refastened every five or six years, yet, while these bridges have been built some twelve or fourteen years, these bolts have never been oiled, painted, and rescrewed. I can take you to a bridge where the rust could be rubbed off the bolts like the bark off a rotten stick. And that is what they call management in the South Island of this colony.

An Hon. MEMBER.—Where is that?

Mr. MORRISON.—Oh! you want too much information. Why, there is another bridge in the southern portion of the other Island that has been up for twelve years; and, when an official inspection of the bridges took place some time ago, after examining this one they would not go back over it with the engine until it had been shored up with sleepers. That is what I have been told on what I consider good authority. So every one will see there has been, as I say, a system of petty economies practised for the purpose of making the railways pay, and enabling the Railway Commissioners to bring down a satisfactory balance-sheet. This balance-sheet has been submitted to show what has been accomplished by their careful administration. I say we know now that a large measure of the profit has been taken out of the bone and sinew of the workers, and that the Commissioners have saved what should have been spent in keeping the roads in proper working order. I maintain also that they have not introduced a single useful measure. They have adopted the same old system of return tickets that they found to be in vogue at Home. Is there any analogy between here and the Mother-country in regard to the necessity for return tickets? Is the system not used at Home for the purpose of inducing people to travel back by the particular company's line which issued the tickets for the outward journey? Then, why did our Commissioners slavishly copy a rule of that description, when there are here no competing lines to bring the passengers back?

Mr. Morrison

They have got to come back, and the Government line is the only one by which they can travel; and therefore, why, I ask, do the Commissioners slavishly adopt the system of return tickets where there is no necessity for it? There is another thing that they might do, but have not done. Why could not railway tickets be sold here as they are in America? There the people were able to purchase the tickets at other places than the railway-station, but here the people cannot purchase their tickets except at the station and within the last five or ten minutes before the train starts. Why do we adhere to that system? Simply because it is a slavish copy of the old English custom. They do not seem to have any originality, and that is where I quarrel with the Commissioners. Some of the Commissioners, with the expert knowledge they had, should have introduced some real improvements into the service. They have not, however, done so. I do not think I need take up the time of the House any longer discussing the matter. I am certainly opposed to the Bill as at present drafted, and I do not think it would be to the credit of the House, or to the advantage of the Ministry, that it should become law; but, at the same time, I shall attempt, when we get the Bill in Committee, to get it amended in this particular direction: that there shall be two managers, one for the North Island and one for the South Island; and, if possible, I shall urge on the Government the necessity of bringing down a classification of the service, so that all the railway employés may be placed on a proper footing, so as to allow a man to know his position when he joins the service, and so that he may be aware that at a particular date he will become entitled to a rise, and so that the thing shall no longer be left to the whim of the head of a particular department. I know that is where a good deal of injustice has been perpetrated by those who stand at the head of the various departments. I know that it is the power which has been exercised in that way which has raised such a feeling of indignation against the Commissioners, and I believe the Commissioners were not really aware of the system which was carried on.

4.30. Mr. CARNCROSS.—I do not think it requires the ability of a prophet to see how this debate is going to end, as it is very plain, from what has been said, that when the discussion is over the railways will have reverted to Government control. In fact, I think we are discussing the wrong Bill, and it seems to me the Bill we should discuss is on Supplementary Order Paper No. 43. We have a Railway Bill on that Order Paper, and I have no doubt that upon that Bill we shall shape this Bill when we reach Committee. Of course, it has been said that in reverting to Government control it will be pretty well in keeping with the verdict of the country, as expressed at last election. I believe I am correct in saying that when this Bill is finished we shall find the railways reverting to Government control. It is generally understood—I do not know whether rightly or wrongly—that the Premier

will be the gentleman who will have the control of those railways.

Mr. SEDDON.—No.

Mr. CARNCROSS.—The Premier says "No," but that is the general opinion, and, although he denies the soft impeachment, I will give him a little bit of advice. It is that he is so over-worked already that he should not attempt to take the control of the railways without, at all events, dropping some of the other offices he is filling. We find him Premier, Native Minister, Minister for Public Works, and for Defence, and I think this is quite enough for one man, and if he is inclined to take the railway control he should give up some of the others. However, the honourable gentleman has informed the House that he is not likely to take the railways, and therefore my advice will be simply wasted. I believe in Ministerial representation, but not in Ministerial control with the right of veto; and I believe that with one Minister on the Railway Board we shall be quite enough in touch with it, and shall know absolutely what is going on. I believe that the whole country is in favour of that, for, at any rate, the farming community is against the Government control. They simply wish to see the Government represented, and thus far, but no further. They do not believe in a Minister having the supreme control; and, for my part, I should like to see two Commissioners with a Minister, the latter not to have supreme control, such as this Bill gives. Now, the present Bill appears to me to impart Ministerial veto without Ministerial responsibility. If everything goes right the Minister gets the credit, but if things go wrong very likely the Commissioners will get the discredit, and it seems to me unfair that such should be the case. In preference to the Bill before us, I would support the amendment of the honourable member for Dunedin City (Mr. Pinkerton) to give Government control over the railways right out, instead of half-measures; but my principal object in speaking in this debate is to say a word or two in regard to the question of the bridges that has been referred to by the honourable member for Caversham. I have been induced to refer to it more particularly by seeing a report on the table within the last two or three days which is supposed to be a report on the condition of the bridges on the Dunedin Section. This is a brief report, and it is a reply to some correspondence that appeared in various papers, and it leads us to infer that the general condition of the bridges is sound. There is a statement here as follows: "The general insinuation that bridges are allowed to decay in order to show a better balance-sheet is without foundation of truth." I am inclined to think that this report is without foundation, and that the statement that the bridges have been allowed to run into a state of considerable decay is very near the mark. We had, as I mentioned, a paper tabled this session showing the condition of the bridges; but there is another paper, and I do not know what has become of that report—whether it has been suppressed, or

what has become of it. But this I do say most emphatically: that twelve months ago, when this House was sitting, a report was furnished to the Commissioners, or to the Railway Department, showing the state of the bridges on the Dunedin Section, and, if this report were examined, it would, I think, be found to be the true document, and not the one I have in my hand. The report I refer to contains full and correct details as to the condition of every bridge on the Dunedin Section—that is, about a hundred and twenty bridges. It gives the state of the decking, beams, piles, down to the very bolts and screws of the bridges, and is most complete in every detail. I have not the least doubt as to the reliability of this report. It shows what state of repair the bridges are in: some bridges are stated as being good for six months, others as being good for twelve months, and others as being good for two years. Those are the classes into which these various bridges were divided, and some of the bridges were marked that they should be repaired immediately, or, as the report puts it, "now." There is a standing rule of the department that all bridges shall be kept in such a state that they shall be good for two years—that is, that they shall be fit for every-day traffic for two years before they require further repairs. That is an absolute rule of the Railway Department; but I state most unhesitatingly that this rule has been absolutely ignored, and this can be proved. A few of these bridges were marked to be repaired "now," and I admit that they have been attended to; but the repairs have been only temporary. Those bridges marked to be good for six months have been, some of them, repaired; but others, which were marked as being only good for twelve months, have had trains running over them daily, yet the bridges have not been repaired since this report was made twelve months ago. I believe the railway employes have the axiom impressed upon them when they join the service that they shall constantly bear in mind that their chief and most important duty is to provide for the safety of the public; but, in my opinion, this rule has been ignored by those who are higher in position, and who are responsible for the present state of affairs. An honourable member reminds me that we have had no accidents, but I think it is more by good luck than by good management that we have had none.

An Hon. MEMBER.—Query.

Mr. CARNCROSS.—The honourable member is perfectly right in raising his query, but I am not stating anything but what I believe is correct. This report which I have referred to was compiled by a foreman of works, to the order of the Resident Engineer, and I think the House will admit that it is a reliable document, and one that should receive the fair consideration of this House as to the statements contained therein. They can be looked on as pretty near the mark, and I would simply remind the honourable gentleman that any observations I am making are founded upon what is contained in that document, and, if

any one is to be blamed, it is the compiler of that document, and not the individual who is speaking now. After the report was furnished, an inquiry was held in Dunedin, at which some eight or nine competent witnesses, gave evidence, and that evidence testified to the absolute accuracy of the report which was furnished by the foreman of works. The report contained specifications as to every stick of timber that was required to put these bridges into proper condition; it went into full details; and I might inform the House that the cost of the timber that was considered necessary to put the Dunedin Section in a proper state of repair would be £10,000. That was quite independent of the cost of labour, you can put the labour down at a similar amount, and I have good authority for stating that it would take a matter of £20,000 to put the bridges on the Dunedin Section only in that state of repair which the railway service demands they should be in. I am speaking of only one section of the railways—the Dunedin Section. I do not know how much would be required for the North Island, or if the bridges in other parts of New Zealand are in a similar state; but I can assure the House that whoever the new Commissioners of Railways may be they will have to dip pretty deeply into the revenue of this colony to place the bridges connected with the railways in that state of repair that they should be in for safe traffic. I should very much like to know what has become of that report. Has it been absolutely suppressed, or pigeonholed, or what has become of it? I think, in fairness, that report ought to be laid on the table. I should like to ask whether the Minister for Public Works is aware of the existence of the report I have referred to.

Mr. SEDDON.—I will make inquiries into the question. The report laid on the table was the one furnished to me when I asked the Commissioners.

Mr. CARNCROSS.—I think, as the result of your inquiries, that you will find my remarks are correct, and that there does exist another report, made twelve months ago; and I feel sure that, if the contents of that report were made public, they would bear out the remarks made by some honourable members, to the effect that, in order to show a good earning percentage, necessary repairs have been neglected, and expenditure has been kept down. The honourable member for Caversham referred to the painting of the bridges, which all will admit is a necessary work that should be executed to keep the timber in that state of heart and goodness that it should be in. There is the Clutha Bridge, which probably cost some £60,000 to £65,000 to erect, and up to the date of the report I am referring to it had not been painted for some fifteen years. Not very long ago, when that bridge was examined, it was found that many of the sorews were corroded three parts through. There are also two bridges in the Clutha electorate over which, twelve months ago, trains were running daily. The foreman of works inspected those bridges, and pronounced them as unsafe and unfit for

Mr. Carncross

traffic; he refused to accept any responsibility whatever in connection with trains running over them, and as a result they were immediately closed. I think I am speaking within the mark when I say that from that day to this a train has not run over those two bridges. I am open to correction, but I believe I am speaking what is absolutely correct. I am quite aware that one's utterances in this House are apt to be criticized, and I think that a man who from his place in this House makes misstatements will certainly be detected, and will have to bear the responsibility for those statements. The remarks that I have been making have a certain amount of seriousness in them, and I would not make them unless I had absolute proof that I was right in making them. I recognise my responsibility in speaking here, and I would not willingly cast away that responsibility in order to act a part. I have a certain amount of information at my disposal, and I deem it my duty to speak now; and I shall be gratified if I find some member who will be able to prove any inaccuracy in the statements made. If the state of the bridges is such as I have indicated, then it is very plain that there has been gross negligence or gross incompetence in connection with the looking-after of them, and it is the duty of the Government to ascertain who is the responsible party for the condition of affairs to which I have referred. However, the best way, I suppose, to find this out will be to ask for the report which I have referred to more than once. I say that that report, which was furnished by experts, went into the full details, and it was not satisfactory, as it showed that the bridges were not in a proper condition. Moreover, inquiry was held afterwards which supported that report.

Mr. CROWTHER.—Why did the Commissioners not report on that, when they took office?

Mr. CARNCROSS.—I should very much like to know that myself, but I presume there can be only one answer. I presume they did not know of the existence of the report.

Mr. CROWTHER.—The Commissioners went over the railways.

Mr. CARNCROSS.—I do not know about that, but I believe they have not seen that report, or I feel convinced they would have made it public; or, at all events, if they had, we should not have heard this report to-day, which leads us to believe that the bridges are in a satisfactory state. I have an extract from a newspaper here, signed by E. Norton Taylor. I am not sure from what paper it is cut, but it looks to me something like the Dunedin *Evening Star*. I will read only one paragraph:—

“The main Waitaki Bridge, bad as it is, is probably the most trustworthy of the lot. I am willing, as I have stated, to point out to experts (outside the Railway Department) where all of the bad places are. I know what I write about, and can prove every word alleged as to the bad state of affairs.”

Well, that report has appeared in one of our public prints, and is signed by the gentleman I

have mentioned, and if it is incorrect it should be challenged. In conclusion, I would say this: that if at any future time my statements regarding the existence of this report are denied, or if they are challenged, then I shall take steps to prove my position, and I would willingly, from my seat in this House, give the authority for the report that I believe to be accurate. I would not allow myself to be made a cat's-paw for the circulation of information that is not correct; and if my remarks are challenged by the Government, or by any one else, so far as the existence of that report is concerned, I shall take every care to secure my position, and take steps to produce, if possible, those who furnished the report. Any one can deny my remarks if he likes, but I simply wish to say that the report on the table about the bridges is, in my opinion, not a correct and satisfactory one. I believe our bridges are not in such a state of repair as railway bridges should be in, in order to secure the safe carriage of passengers from day to day, and I think the best thing the Government could do now is to make all inquiries, and ascertain who furnished the report, and what has become of it.

Mr. FLATMAN.—Sir, I should not like to allow this Bill to pass without making a few comments on it. I think one of the worst features in the Bill is the formation of the Board. I should be ready to support the Bill as a whole had it not been that the Minister, in my opinion, has the power of veto over the Commissioners, to which thing I could not agree. I agree with some honourable members who have spoken that the Board should be composed of, say, two Commissioners and a Minister, and I believe that the Minister should be created Railway Minister, and be paid for his work, and that he should have a casting-vote; because, if there were only two Commissioners appointed it would work in the same way as provided by subsection (2) of section 11 of the present Act, which is repealed by section 7 of the present Bill, and which provides, "All questions before the Commissioners shall be decided by a majority of votes; but when only two Commissioners are present, and they differ, the question upon which they differ shall be deferred for decision at a future meeting." I believe that, if the power is distributed as I have indicated, they would be enabled to do their business as they go along in a straightforward and satisfactory manner, in something like the way local bodies do their work. A comparison between the estimates of expenditure in 1894-95 and those of 1893-94 shows a reduction of £3,624, but that is no guarantee it is a saving. Not a bit of it. As it has been stated by honourable members who have previously spoken, we have no warrant that that is a saving. The bridges may have suffered to save this money, and I am sorry to have heard a number of honourable members state that our railways, and bridges especially, are in such a bad state of repair; and I should like this to be fully inquired into as soon as possible, for such a statement as that certainly does not make it very enticing

for people to travel on our railways. There are a number of travellers coming into the country—visitors, tourists, and others—who bring a great deal of money with them, and I think such a statement as we have before us—that our railways are unsafe for traffic—will have the effect of keeping them out of the country. I hope there will be an inquiry, and that the result will be that these lines will be put into a proper state of repair. It must have arisen from bad management in connection with construction, otherwise the bridges could not have got into that state of disrepair in the short time they have been left. With the present system of our railway management, and with the present rates and charges, our railways are simply a taxing-machine. We know that the toll-collection of old days is now considered to be a barbarous method of collecting money from the public; and I say at the present time the railways, under this system of rates and charges in connection with passenger-traffic and freights, are only another way of putting a toll-bar upon the lines. It does not matter what we lose: I say these high prices are detrimental to the progress and settlement of the country, for if we can get the settlement of the country we shall get interest on our money in a way that perhaps we cannot see now. For us to endeavour to make the railways pay 2 to 4 per cent. over actual expenses is just like asking a Chinaman or a market-gardener to tax his wheelbarrow to show better returns from his market-garden. The honourable member for Eden stated in his speech that the Commissioners would be prepared to make a reduction if the House expressed its wish in that direction. Well, I very much question whether that would be the case. I know that reductions have been applied for from the Commissioners by the farming community, but they have not been given effect to. I have a return here which shows how a sop is apparently held out to the farmers; otherwise I should not have troubled to speak on this Bill. I speak now with regard to the carriage of manures and wheat. From Dunedin to Palmerston South the carriage of manure is charged for at the rate of 7s. per ton, with a minimum of two tons. For the same distance for wheat the charge is 8s. 5d., with a ton and a half minimum. From Dunedin to Oamaru, for manure the charge is 9s. 7d., and for wheat 11s. 8d.; while from Dunedin to Timaru it is 11s. 4d. for manure, and 13s. 11d. for wheat. Where we use one ton of manure we expect a return of four or five tons of wheat at least; and yet we have to pay from Timaru to Dunedin 2s. 7d. a ton more for wheat than for manure. That is simply a sop held out to us, because the amount of production of wheat is about five times the quantity of manure we should use. It has been stated here that Oamaru stone should be carried for next to nothing. A train—which takes, I think, six hours to run from Oamaru to Christchurch—with, say, 300 tons of Oamaru stone would earn something like £158 15s. 8d. in the six hours. And when it is

shown to us that the expense of running a train over the line is 4s. 9½d. per mile, you will see what this traffic is. It is simply shutting up the stone-quarries at Oamaru, for the simple reason that 10s. 3d. per ton is too high altogether. If the rates are reduced it will tend to open this and other industries. There is no doubt about it, as I said before, that our railways are a taxing-machine. What is said already in this House with regard to traction-engines?—That to keep these engines off the road we should put a tax upon them. Why, the proper method is to reduce the rates on our railways, so that the traction-engines shall not be brought into competition with the railways. I know that in my part of the country traction-engines run alongside the railway-line for thirty miles. There is no other road for them to go in taking wool from the Mackenzie country to Timaru. Then, a great industry is being shut up in our fish trade. The charge on fish should be a merely nominal charge. It should be only 6d. a hundredweight or part of a hundredweight from any station to any station. The cost of carrying fish now, I believe, from Oamaru to Dunedin would be more than a man gets for it who risks his life to catch it; and therefore I think we cannot expect our railways to pay us while these anomalies exist. I know that the Commissioners were asked for a return with a view to the rates being lowered between Oamaru and Dunedin, and they were lowered to 12s. 6d. per ton. They said these rates paid; and, if these rates of 12s. 6d. per ton paid for seventy-eight miles, why should they not pay upon the lines between the intermediate stations—for instance, from Dunedin to Palmerston South? Half-way to Oamaru the charge for the same goods is about double per ton compared with the charge between Dunedin and Oamaru. The freight between Dunedin and Invercargill—139 miles—is only 18s. per ton, and it is £2 9s. to Tapanui, about £1 15s. to Gore, and £2 15s. to Riversdale, which are much shorter distances. I trust that the alteration in the constitution of the Board under this Bill will lead to some amendment, and that our railways will be worked on a better principle than they have been in the past, for our industries can never be properly worked until goods are carried at cheaper rates.

5.0. I know of one instance myself where some goods were ordered, and the charge on them was about £2 6s. for being carried 126 miles. The actual cost of the manufacture of those goods was only about £3 per ton, and they could have been brought from England a great deal cheaper than they were carried 126 miles by our railways. While we have such anomalies as that, we cannot expect our railways to do much good for the country. I consider that it is not by the amount they return to us in interest that we should estimate the value of our railways; it is by the good they do the country in enabling people to travel about and get employment, and in giving the people means of seeing the country, and thus extending their business. I believe it is in the interest of the objects I

Mr. Flatman

have alluded to that our railways should chiefly be conducted.

Mr. MEREDITH.—Our public debt at present amounts to something like thirty-nine millions of money, and out of that we have spent some fifteen millions in the construction of railways, so that our railways are the most important asset against this large liability. I do not therefore wonder at the remarks made by honourable members on the second reading of this Bill. I noticed that every honourable member approached the question with seriousness, and dealt with it from each individual standpoint in a careful manner. With many of the views advanced by honourable members I most cordially agree, particularly with the views advanced by the honourable member for the Taieri, to the effect that he believed the farming community were opposed to the alteration proposed by this Bill in removing the management of our railways from the Commissioners to the Government. I am of the same opinion as the honourable member. I have had opportunities of coming in contact with the farming community, and in regard to my own electorate I think I am voicing their views on the subject. When the question of railway management was discussed in 1887 the statements then made, as embalmed in *Hansard*, disclosed a most unsatisfactory condition of railway management. It must be admitted that amongst the general community that was the idea which obtained, and, if we are to look upon the members of this House as a reflex of the mind of the community, I think the sentiments given expression to, and the divisions which took place on the second and third readings of the Government Railways Bill in 1887, justify me in the remarks which I have just now made. I was not then in the House, and therefore I fall back upon the *Hansard* report. I will read two or three lines from the report of the debate which took place on the second reading of the Railways Bill in 1887:—

“Ever since the inauguration of our railway system dissatisfaction has existed, and year by year this dissatisfaction has grown to such an extent that we now find the public from one end of the country to the other all clamouring for a change.”

Those are the sentiments then uttered by an honourable member on the floor of this House, and I do not find that those sentiments were seriously challenged. If we contrast the views which existed then amongst the community generally with the views which exist now we may notice a most striking contrast in favour of the latter. I admit that, in some directions, at the present time there is a strong feeling of dissatisfaction, but I would remind honourable members that that feeling mainly arises from those in the centres of population. I am of opinion that amongst those who require the use of our railways—those who contribute towards the railway revenue—amongst this class there is not a great deal of complaint. No doubt there is a certain amount of dissatisfaction on matters of detail connected with the present management. My opinion is that, if an altera-

tion were made in the management so as to give a Minister of the Crown a seat on the Board with the Commissioners, that would be all that is required. That would meet with almost universal approval even amongst the farming community. So far as the views of Chambers of Commerce and other kindred organizations have been voiced, they are against any change in the management; but, while I respect the views of these bodies, I respect more the views of the great body of the public in these matters. I would refer to the divisions which took place on the Railways Bill in 1887. For the second reading of that Bill the numbers were—Ayes, 51; Noes, 6; and on the third reading the numbers were—Ayes, 56; Noes, 18. These figures show that amongst the members of the House then there was a very strong feeling that a change should take place in the management of our railways. When the Railways Bill was introduced last session, what did we find? In the division on the second reading there were twenty "Ayes" and twelve "Noes"—not a very large majority in favour of reverting to Government control. Honourable members are aware that the Bill of last session received in another place the "happy despatch." I wish to compare the revenue derived from our railways prior and subsequent to the passing of the Act of 1887. I am of opinion that our railways should be conducted as much as possible on commercial lines. At the same time, every assistance should be given to the settlers to develop the resources of the country, and to get their produce to market as cheaply as possible; but I contend that the Commissioners have been doing their best in both directions, to please all parties. If this House made recommendations to the Commissioners to modify the railway tariff the Commissioners would not dare to say Nay; they would be bound to give effect to the wishes of the people as expressed in any resolution of the House. Have we passed such resolutions? We have not. We have come here and lodged complaints against the Commissioners. We have presented petitions from railway employés who have felt themselves aggrieved; and, if this state of things is going to be intensified by removing the management from the Commissioners to the Government, instead of the session lasting three months it will last six months; instead of our being able to deal with measures in the interests of the colony, our time will be taken up with matters of detail. On the Order Paper at present there are over seventy Bills. I suppose not more than a third of these will pass into law during this session. Let us consider what will be the position if this House is going to be flooded with petitions—if members are going to be influenced continually by their constituents in bringing grievances under the notice of this House or the Minister of Railways. I find that the receipts, after paying expenses, for 1881, left a balance which gave interest upon the amount spent on construction of £3 8s. 3d. That shows, upon the whole, satisfactory management. In 1887, under Go-

vernment management, the amount went down to £2 2s. 2d. per centum. In 1893, under the management of the Commissioners, it has again gone up to £3 1s. per centum. The average for the four years preceding the appointment of the Commissioners was £2 8s. per centum; whereas during the four years of the Commissioners' management the average has gone up to £2 18s. 11d. per centum, or an average of 10s. 11d. per annum in favour of the present management. In the figures I have just quoted I think there is something for honourable members to think about before the division on the second reading of the Bill takes place. At any rate, these figures commend themselves to me, because, if the percentage upon the amount expended on our railways goes down, the amount deficient will have to come out of taxation, direct or indirect. At present there are 4,500 railway employés. Now, if we assume that most of these are married men, we might suppose that 9,000 is the voting-power of the railway employés; and, if we are prepared to admit that each one of these influences another individual, then we have a voting-power of something like 18,000. This voting-power will be mainly confined to the large centres of population, wherever there are Government workshops. In reading over the speeches of members on the second reading of the Railway Bill last session, and listening to the speeches made on the present occasion, I notice a great difference. There has been a complete somersault in the opinions of some honourable gentlemen. Without being tedious, I should like to read a few remarks made on the occasion of the second reading of the Railway Bill last session:—

"It would be idle to deny that, as a whole, the travelling public of New Zealand are more satisfied with the present management of the railways than they were before the commencement of the present management, and it cannot be denied that the Commissioners have shown a fairly progressive spirit. They have lowered the fares; they have given us return tickets; they have not in any instance raised the fares; they have given us quicker time-tables in many instances, and better accommodation; and altogether it seems to me that their arrangements have been satisfactory."

An Hon. MEMBER.—Who said that?

Mr. MEREDITH.—The honourable member for Wellington Suburbs (Dr. Newman). That honourable gentleman seems to have turned a complete somersault from the opinions he expressed on the second reading of the Bill introduced last session, to the views he has expressed on the second reading of this Bill. I can only account for this by assuming that the railway employés at the Pitone workshops have called upon the honourable gentleman to toe the line. If we infer that such influence is at work at the present time, what will be the case in the future when our railways will be under political control? The honourable member for Dunedin City (Mr. Earnshaw) stated that "had the Premier brought down a Bill vesting the railways in the Crown he felt

sure it would have received the support of the Liberal party throughout the country." I am not quite sure of that. If the honourable gentleman had confined his remarks to the cities he would perhaps have been correct. If he had confined his remarks to the railway employes he would have been more correct still. My honourable friend the member for Riccarton said that the country desired that we should get power of control over the railways. I would ask that honourable gentleman, who represents to some extent a country constituency, how many communications he has received from those using the railways, and from the farming community in his particular district, asking him to use his influence as a member of the House in bringing about an alteration in the management of the railways from that of the Commissioners to that of the Government. Now, so far as honourable members have spoken—I do not desire to be personal—I would point out that those gentlemen who have been most pronounced in their view that a change should take place in the management of the railways are mostly those representing the centres of population—representing persons who do not use the railways themselves. There are, for instance, the honourable member for Wellington Suburbs, the honourable member for Dunedin City (Mr. Earnshaw), and the honourable member for Riccarton (Mr. G. W. Russell); while, on the other hand, we find the following honourable members against the proposal of this Bill to hand over the railway management to the Government: the honourable member for Selwyn (Mr. Saunders), the honourable member for Wairarapa (Mr. Buchanan), the honourable member for Otaki (Mr. Wilson), the honourable member for Hawke's Bay (Captain Russell), and the honourable member for Ashburton (Mr. McLachlan), and myself. Sir, I have no personal feeling whatever against the Commissioners. I have brought matters under their notice at the request of my constituents, and in very few instances have I succeeded in gaining the desired end. I do not know that they were altogether to blame. Certain influences are brought to bear upon me, and I endeavour to influence the Commissioners, and, although I do not succeed, I do not think it is my fault, neither do I think that the Commissioners are very much to blame. In March last farming prospects were not very encouraging in the Canterbury District. As honourable members are aware, grain-growing is carried on to a very large extent within the Provincial District of Canterbury; and, the prospects there being so bad, I communicated with the Premier, and he kindly communicated with the Railway Commissioners, and I suggested to him that, in consequence of the shortage of the yield of grain, through the effects of rust and the depredations of the caterpillar, the Railway Commissioners should help the farming community by lowering the rate for haulage of grain during the following two or three months by 33 per cent. After waiting some time, I received a reply to the effect that

Mr. Meredith

the Commissioners commiserated the farming community for the loss they sustained, but said that in consequence of the shortage of the yield in grain crops there would be a shrinkage of revenue, and the farmers, supposing they made the allowance I suggested, would only benefit to the extent of some £40,000—a mere bagatelle. I thought at the time that the £40,000 would have been most acceptable to the farming community. However, the Railway Commissioners, in their wisdom, thought it was the right thing to decline to make the reduction. I have also brought under the notice of the Commissioners several other matters without redress. I quite agree with the honourable member for Caversham, that a great improvement might be made in the way of railway tickets. I have always held the opinion that railway tickets should be sold in the centres of population; that if a person buys a railway ticket it is his property, and that he ought to do with it as he likes, and use it whenever it suits his convenience. What does it matter to the Railway Department when it is used? I believe that such a system is carried out very largely in the United States of America. I do not wish to trouble the House any further upon the question, but I might briefly say that I am opposed to removing the management of our railways from the Commissioners on to the Government wholly. I am in favour of Parts I. and II. of the Bill, with certain modifications. The details can be dealt with in Committee. I approve that a Minister of the Crown should occupy a position on the Board of management, and be responsible to the House, and retain the services of the Commissioners. I cannot see my way to accept the suggestion of the honourable member for Pareora, who recommended that one of the Commissioners should be dispensed with and two retained. I should like to point out this: that we cannot expect a Minister of the Crown to be an expert in railway management. If we required three Commissioners in the past, three will be required in the future, and, so far as my personal knowledge goes, I think the three gentlemen we have at the present time are very suitable men for the positions. Mr. Scott is a practical man, and understands engineering in all its departments and operations; he is just the man to have charge of the workshops and of the machinery connected with the railways. Mr. Ronayne understands about permanent way; he is a practical man in that direction. And, of course, it is unnecessary for me to speak one word in favour of Mr. McKerrow, who has displayed such intelligence, judgment, and shrewdness in the management of our railways, and who has always been so approachable and reasonable to every honourable member who has had to call on him upon matters connected with our railways. I may say that I most cordially approve of clause 16, providing for a Court of Appeal for railway employes.

Mr. T. MACKENZIE.—I merely wish to say that the matter of the Bill now before the

House does not meet with my approval, and, in case of my silence being construed into indifference or acquiescence, I wish to say that I consider the Bill is altogether inadequate to meet the circumstances of the colony. I hold that the Bill should either be one vesting the entire control in a non-political Board, or else that the Government themselves should take over the absolute control of the railways. This is neither the one thing nor the other. I have all along held that the Commissioners should be altogether outside political control. If the Minister once more seizes control of the lines, we shall have men appointed to positions not on account of their qualifications, but by virtue of their political influence. Now, with regard to some of the remarks made, I should like to say that I think honourable gentlemen are wrong in considering that the rates upon goods have been reduced at the expense of the workers. I have papers here, which it is impossible in the time allotted to me to refer to, to prove that; but I should like to say I believe there is very great room in connection with the railways for more efficient management. I consider that the travelling public have not their wants properly attended to. The lines run hither and thither, and people come and go on them, but there is very little done for their comfort, or to induce them to travel. I know that a person travelling in the South, from Dunedin to Lyttelton, will find no conveniences at all for obtaining food. There are two refreshment-rooms between Dunedin and Christchurch, where, instead of getting the proper refreshment that travellers require, they will get something which will probably put them out of health. The cause of this inferior catering is owing to the excessive rents charged for premises, and the travelling public suffer in consequence. I consider that trains running a long distance like that ought to have a refreshment-car attached, as there is on the Manawatu Company's line. I also think that in some of the colder districts we ought to have the carriages heated in winter-time. The want of attention to these small details has seriously interfered with the management of the lines. Then, I consider the Railway Commissioners should reduce the charges still further upon manure and lime. I do not agree with honourable members who think it is possible to have an all-round reduction. Whether we like it or not, the railways must yield a certain return upon the expenditure, and, in order that that may be done, certain charges must be made. I shall not detain the House with any further remarks.

7.30. Mr. E. M. SMITH.—Sir, this Bill has been looked forward to by the colony, and more especially by the representatives of the people. We know the Government intimated to the country that they had been compelled to make temporary arrangements by the appointment of three Commissioners for nine months; and it devolves upon the Government now to make some further provision. Naturally enough they have prepared a Bill, which they have submitted to

the House, and it is now for the representatives of the people to say how far they will support the Government proposal, and in what manner we shall deal with the railways in future. I have always been very plain and distinct on this railway question. When I come to think that we have spent between fifteen and sixteen millions on the railways, and they are nearly all in the hands of the Government—when I think that we have spent nearly forty millions on public works, immigration, and railways, and we have very little to show for it except our railways—I recognise it is a fine national estate, and one that we shall be able to hand down to succeeding generations with pride. But on the management of the railways in the past I have something to say, and the criticism I shall offer on the management of the past will be only in the interest of good management and good government in the future. I know we cannot go back to the old times when we had no railways. No doubt all who have travelled from the Empire City to Taranaki have found the journey a long and tedious one, and, although it is a long distance and it takes fifteen hours, I know the Railways Commissioners could do that in twelve hours if they chose, and there must be something wrong in the management. But when I remember that it used to take us five days to get to Wellington by coach, I say this is a great advance, and shows that the colony has progressed not only in respect to roads, but railways. I have carefully watched the history of our railways from the initiation of that bold great policy, and we have made rapid strides. But I say this: that our system of management wants overhauling from the foundation upward. I have mingled with railway-men, and I know myself that they have grievances innumerable, and that the grievances are not redressed in the manner they ought to be. We are dealing with the men engaged in our railways in a different manner from the way we deal with other employés in the public service. Why do we deal with them differently from those in the Postal and Telegraph Department? We hear no grumbling from that department; and why should we hear so much grumbling from the men on our railways? It is simply because we have State control on the former. We have a Minister at the head; and I believe, if we had a Minister on the Board with the Commissioners, the whole of this dissatisfaction among our railway-men would cease to exist. Until some tribunal is set up—some Board of Appeal to which they can go beyond those men who formulate complaints and have power to deal with the men at every twist and turn of the railways—there will be bad management and discontent. Then, again, when I remember that the railways cost between fifteen and sixteen millions, and when I know that between four and five thousand men and boys are employed on them, I say it is too much of the national estate to be placed in the hands of three irresponsible men. The Minister only within the last few days has had to appeal

to the Commissioners; and what has been the result? If they had been private railways he would have got a reply long ago; but we cannot get replies from the Commissioners in anything like the time we should. I say our railways are well managed from some points of view. We have very sober men, and courteous officials. I know myself the travelling public, and also visitors from England, are constantly remarking about the civility they get from the officials on the railways—from the guards, porters, Stationmasters, and every one. That is everything that can be desired. Then, again, the work under the present system, as far as platelaying and the rolling-stock is concerned, is very good. But, Sir, as to the road itself—the bridges, and the permanent-way—they are not of that substantial character that they should be on the national railways of a great country like New Zealand. We have been putting up wooden bridges, which are always hastening to decay, and it is always a case of here and there taking out a decayed plank and putting in a new stay. In a country like New Zealand we ought to have had iron bridges long ago. If we had them of iron it would not take so much of the earnings of the railways to keep them in repair.

Mr. TANNER.—How about rust?

Mr. E. M. SMITH.—I would take care they should not rust. We would make them of New Zealand iron. I would tar them over. How would you look tarred? Then, when we see two engines hauling a train up a hill, and if we ask for the reason, we are told the engines are not powerful enough. Why do we not get some powerful engines such as the Manawatu Railway Company has? Because the bridges will not carry them. There is a state of affairs! Month by month, quarter by quarter, year by year, the traffic is increasing—both passenger and goods traffic. We have a grievance in our district. From the Breakwater to the town it is two miles, and almost a straight line, and yet the Commissioners charge 8s. 6d. a ton for goods carried over that two miles. If there were no railway, and goods were conveyed by express, the storekeepers could get their goods carried for 2s. or half a crown cheaper than they are now paying for railway carriage. We only ask them to reduce the charge by 6d. They collect our wharf rates, and get 2½ per cent. on the whole, and yet this railway concession cannot be got from them. They admit the charge is too great, but they say they must reckon the interest and the original cost of the railway. This is ridiculous. The thing should not be reckoned on that line at all. If we get the 6d. from the charges, we do not want it to go into the pockets of the merchants or the public; it would be spent to improve the harbour, which is bringing a large amount of revenue to the railway. We have £200,000 of a debt on this harbour. We have spent £230,000, and we have appealed to the House for redress, but we have not been able to get that redress, and we must look for some other means to keep up our staff. I have now stated the case, and I hope the Govern-

Mr. E. M. Smith

ment will bear it in mind, and will insist on the Commissioners giving an answer to this application of ours. We cannot progress in our district. The Minister of Lands is doing his "level best" for us. He is planting special settlements and settling large blocks of land, and there is general prosperity all round our district. People are flocking there every day, they are taking up land as fast as the honourable gentleman has it in the market; and the Public Trustee is bringing land also into the market, and this will increase the traffic, and therefore, to us, the necessity of keeping the harbour open and reducing the railway charges to the lowest possible extent. When I go and see the back roads adjoining the railways I see there is bad management in connection with them. Railways ought to be made conducive to the settlement of the country, and they ought to carry road-metal and gravel at the lowest possible expense. The Township of Stratford has been for years in a condition of mud, whereas four or five miles along the railway there is plenty of gravel. The railway authorities say, "We have nothing to do with the roads; we are only carriers. If there are good roads they will begin to cart." That is ridiculous. The more roads we have the more traffic will be brought to the railways. The railways should be used in the interest of settlement and in the interest of producers. So far as the carriage of produce to the market is concerned, there is something curious about the management of our railways; and then, as to the passenger-traffic, the first and second-class fares to New Plymouth happen to be a little more than the charge by steamer. Many people would travel on the railways in preference to the steamers, especially as travelling on steamers does not agree with them, but they are compelled to travel on the steamers on account of the difference in price. It has been the idea with the Commissioners in the past to see if they could not strike a big balance-sheet at the end of the year. They want to say, "See how well we have managed the railways. We have increased the percentage of profit from £2 10s. to £2 18s. 6d." And they say that is good management. I say it is bad management, because they have been carrying the produce of the farmers at too high rates. They have been demanding more than they should from settlers who are the taxpayers of the country. These settlers are paying taxation twice over. They are paying interest on our national debt, and are called upon again to pay very high tariff-rates. Then, take the case of the Manawatu line. The commercial travellers took the case up, and it was decided in the Courts of law and given against the Railway Commissioners and the proprietors of the Manawatu line, and now you can travel right though. But even now you have to change carriages, and to change your luggage from one van to another. The Government ought to take over that line; and I maintain that no private line should intercept the Government railways between New Plymouth and the Empire City. It would be to the interest

of the bondholders, and the shareholders, and the travelling public, were the Government to come down next session with a proposal that had been gone into by clear-headed business-men to take over the Manawatu Railway. It is ridiculous to wait to see what will be the effect of the Foxton line. Now is the time to take the Manawatu Railway over, and let us have all the railways under Government control. If we do that, then those who come after us will say what grand legislators we were, and how well we legislated in the interests of the country, and what a fine national property we have left them. If the Government get this Bill passed, and the Minister has a seat on the Board, I will ask them to pass a Civil Service Bill, and include the railway servants in the Civil Service, and have them on the same lines as officers of other departments of the State. Look at the different treatment they now receive. Take the sick-pay, the travelling-allowances, and even leave of absence. There is a great demarcation between the higher and lower grades, and there is also too great a difference between the sick-pay allowances and leaves of absence. Every member knows we cannot expect to get these changes until we change the system of management of our railways. I believe that the three men we have now have an anxious desire to do what is right, just, and proper, but as long as we look upon the railways as being under their control people will have no control over them, neither will the representatives of the people. It is likely if the present system continues that these Commissioners will deal with things as they have been dealt with in the past. It is only by changing the system that we can hope to do any good to the country. As these men have only been engaged for nine months, they will not object. In fact, it will be to their interest to have a Minister sitting alongside of them. It will take a lot of responsibility off their shoulders. Then we can reach the Minister in this House. I do not believe there is any honourable gentleman here who would go to the Minister and ask for anything unfair, any concession that was in the interest of the classes, or of any individual, and not in the interest of the masses. I have confidence that honourable members will do what I myself would do. Perhaps this will be news to Ministers and to honourable members: I will just tell you how some of the men are treated, and only recently too. Within the last few weeks certain men were working in a gang of plate-layers. One of the men tells me he worked for thirteen years on the railways, and under four "bosses," or gangers, and he never had any complaint against him, and never fell out with any of these bosses. The best of men will, of course, fall out. We fall out sometimes in this House. And what is the result in this case? A complaint is lodged against this man, and that complaint is sent on to Wellington. The first news he gets is that he is removed away from his little piece of land which he is gradually paying for, which is to provide for a "rainy day," for old age, and for his

children; without a chance of appeal, without being able to state how this disagreement arose, he is packed away from his family, and has had to leave the railway. You may say, "A man has to do what he is told, and to go where he is sent." If it was in the interest of the service, the man should go; but what is the result? The fact is, this man is sent away to another part of the country, and he has no appeal. It is done continually. That is the reason I am trying to expose it in the House. That is the way our men have been treated on the railways. There is an order that the men should not smoke in working-hours,—and I quite believe in that; but a man got up early to walk the track before the train left, to see that everything is right—that no rails had been taken up, no bridges washed away, and no culverts caved in during the night. He was going back to his work smoking; away comes the engineer round the corner on his bicycle, and, seeing the man having his whiff, he says, "Hullo! you are smoking!" and he is fined half a crown. And the man who fined him half a crown was smoking at the same time. These are only a few examples. I could show scores between here and Taranaki. I know it is a science to manage men, but it is hard that a hard-working man, after being thirteen years in the service, should be driven away from home—from where he has acquired a little piece of land and a few cows. The very fact of his having possession of these shows that he is a sober, steady man. These things show that in the interests of the men and in the interests of the nation we should have a Minister on the Board, with or without Commissioners. I shall support the Government Bill—first, with the Minister on the Board: then we shall have some control over the railways. Without a Minister we shall have no control. With the Minister on the Board we shall be able to get some redress, and the men will be treated as they should be treated, and not as they now are. But if the Government and members prefer the railways should be brought back wholly and solely under the control of the Government, and make them responsible, I should support that too, because you all know I am a Government supporter. I will conclude as follows:—

Over the forge's heat and ashes,
Over the engine's iron head,
Where the rapid shuttle flashes,
And the spindle whirls its thread;

Amidst the dust, the speed, and clamour
Of the loom-shed and the mill,
Great results are growing still.

There is labour lowly tending
Each requirement of the hour;
There is genius still extending
Science and the world of power.

Though too oft by fashion's creatures
Work and workers may be blamed,
Commerce may not hide its features
Or industries be ashamed.

What is noble? That which places
Truth in franchise's will,
Leaving steps, like angels' traces,
That mankind may follow still.

E'en though scorn's malignant glances
Hold him poorest of his clan,
He is noble who advances
Freedom and the cause of the railway-man.

That's me.

Mr. MONTGOMERY. — Sir, I feel that I cannot rise to the flight of eloquence which my honourable friend who has just sat down has risen to, and any one speaking at this late period of the debate cannot expect to say anything new, and I am quite aware I shall not do so. But, inasmuch as a bare vote upon the second reading of the Bill will give very little information to my constituents, and as I wish them to know what my feeling is in regard to the Bill, I desire to make a few remarks upon it. At the election we had the question of railway control before us, but I submit we did not have before us the question of absolute Government control as against the Commissioners' control. The question which was before us at that time was the question of the Commissioners' control, with the Government having a voice in the matter, by the present system. That was the question which we were asked about on the public platform, and that was the question which was last session before the House. I said, when I was asked, that I was in favour of the Government having a certain amount of voice in the railway affairs, but that I was not in favour of political control of the railways. I am of that opinion still, and I am going to support the second reading of this Bill, although I am not in favour of all of its provisions.

8.0. With regard to the railways, I hold that the Commissioners are the best Board of control, because it is an independent control. At the same time I think that this House, and the opinion of its members, should be represented upon the Board, and that they should be represented not in such a way that the Minister of Railways for the time being should have complete control over the railways, but merely that he should have the opportunity of inquiring into the railway finances, and the opportunity of suggesting to the Commissioners how they may effect economy or advance settlement. In fact, he would have the opportunity of representing the members of the House on the Board. But I am not in favour, and never have been in favour, of taking away the authority and the power from the Commissioners and vesting them under Government control. I have failed to find, and have not heard in any arguments which have been advanced, any special reason for a change of this sort—the change which is suggested by Part III. of the Bill, a Part which I need hardly say was not in the Bill of last year. It is said by some that the Commissioners do not efficiently manage the railways, and we have a number of members who give us small details about the way in which the railways have been mismanaged; and it is said the country is against the present Commissioners, and is against the present system of management, and is complaining of it. I grant that complaints are being made against the Commissioners; but I ask whether any body of three men, or any

Mr. E. M. Smith

number of men in the country who may be appointed to control the railways, would not have complaints made against their management. It is absolutely impossible to conciliate every one's opinion. It is absolutely impossible, in controlling the railways, or in controlling anything else, to please every one. Some members will say, "We want express trains to run fifty miles an hour"; other members will say, "Certainly, that is quite right, but let them stop at our sidestation"; some members will say, "We want the timber rates reduced"; other members will say, "We want the gravel rates reduced"; and another set will want the coal rates reduced, and the whole people will agree that we want the railways to pay. And I say that it is impossible for the Commissioners, or any other body of men, to make the railways pay and at the same time consent to make reductions all over the colony to suit each individual person and each individual trade and industry. Then, there are objections made to the system. It is said that the main object of the railways should be to encourage settlement, to open up roads, to encourage industry, and so on. Now, I have no objection to industries being encouraged, and in fact, I have a desire to see several of them promoted, but I do not think it would be fair that we should introduce any system by which those portions of the colony which have no railways should be taxed to make up the deficiency in the railway revenue caused by the railways in other parts of the colony not being run so as to pay. I think the first principle should be to make them pay, or as nearly so as possible. It may be urged that this is very wrong; but I am sure that is the principle which the Commissioners are acting upon, and I believe in so acting they have, if not the authority, the approval of Ministers, and of the majority of this House.

Mr. G. W. RUSSELL.—What about settling the country?

Mr. MONTGOMERY.—"What about settling the country?" I entirely approve of settling the country, but I am not in favour of settling the country at the expense of the railways. We have been settling the country for years, and we are settling it now; but I do not see that the lowering of the freights on the railways would facilitate settlement in any great measure, and it is much better for that purpose to bring down a Bill such as the Minister of Lands is bringing down than as a part of the railway policy. And, then, who are those who want the change mainly? Who are they that are asking that our Commissioners shall be superseded, and that we shall have complete Government control? I venture to say the people who are asking this are people who have been refused some favour or advantage by the Commissioners, and who think, if they have a Ministry in power, and they are on the Government side, they would induce the Minister who controls the railways to give them the concession they were unable to obtain from the Commissioners. There are a number of instances in which the Commissioners, rightly

or wrongly, have said they would not grant some concession of this kind—that they would not run more trains, or reduce the rates on certain articles. I venture to say the people who have been so refused have the idea that if the Minister had control they could ask him for this and he would grant it. I say it would be a demoralising thing for the country if it were so. I have seen no sufficient reason for a change from the Commissioners' control to the Government control; and I will go further and say I see very great disadvantages that would arise from Government control. We should require, I presume, an additional Minister, for I do not think the Minister for Public Works, who has, probably, more work to do than any other man in New Zealand, could undertake any more; and it is undesirable to add to the Ministry. It is very undesirable, I think, to increase the number of Ministers. We should have railway matters occupying a large part of the attention of this House. We should have every day questions on the Order Paper dealing with matters ranging from differential tariffs to the quality of tarpaulins. We should require, in fact, a special Order Paper for railway questions alone. We should have the afternoon taken up with discussing some local questions relating to railways, and, perhaps, at the end of the discussion the adjournment of the House moved so that some member might explain a particular grievance. As a result, if we changed to a system of political control, we might have to sit three months longer to discuss railway questions. And then there is the point which has been raised by every one, that it might lead to political corruption. I do not say it would; but it is quite possible it might. All I say is that whoever manages the railways should, above all things, be above suspicion. There should be no question of politics introduced. Nobody would be able to say, if there was not complete political control, that any favouritism was given to either one side or the other in regard to railway matters. Now, that would be said otherwise, although we could deny it. And, moreover, if we consider that a particular Ministry might be in a position in this House when there were only two or three votes between them and the other side, we can see that under such circumstances there might be an overwhelming influence brought to bear to extort certain concessions. It is not desirable that any Minister should be in this position, and therefore it is not desirable that we should pass a measure to put him in such a position. I hope we shall not take away our present independent set of Commissioners and make the railways subject to political control, and perhaps to political corruption. I hope, on the other hand, we shall do as the Bill suggests—give the House some voice on the Board; that the Minister who has a seat on the Board—I hope he will not have two votes—will have the opportunity of expressing his opinions, and will have the opportunity of going into all questions relating to finance on the Board. But I do hope that he will not consent to introduce any

measure at the wish of one side of the House or another for the purpose of changing the management of the railways to political control. I have just expressed these views because I am going to vote for the second reading of the Bill, and I wish to say, in addition to the explanation I have given of my views, that I shall support those amendments in Committee which may be most in accordance with my views.

Mr. BELL.—I am not going to delay the House very long, but I wish to explain my reasons for voting against this Bill. Many members, speaking in this House, make constant complaints against the late Railway Commissioners that their management was devoted principally to a financial object and the provision of the interest that we require to pay on the cost of the railways, and that they refused to disregard that factor in carrying out the other object of the railways—the promotion of settlement in the country. While, Sir, I can understand that those who hold that view have good reasons for desiring a return to the Government control, I think the memory of the particular event which led to the transference of the railways from political control to the Commissioners is fading away. It is vivid enough, however, in my mind—I mean the story of the Canterbury grain rates. Sir, when a former Ministry reduced the grain rates it was to propitiate the voters of Canterbury, and they did so successfully; the railways were used as a political factor, and not for either the promotion of settlement or the provision of revenue. And, again, when another Ministry, for the provision of revenue properly payable by those whose grain was carried on the railways, raised the rates, they did their duty to the country, well knowing the fate that was before them in consequence.

Mr. G. W. RUSSELL.—After the wool had been brought down.

Mr. BELL.—I am not speaking of the precise merits of either action. Sir, I say the story is fading from the memories of honourable gentlemen; they forget that under political control the railways have been used as a political engine. It is against that I protest. I am not speaking of those who are here, or saying that which will apply to one party more than to another, although it may well be believed that I should trust those of whom I am speaking, who did their duty, rather than any of the honourable gentlemen who are now sitting on those benches. Well, I have sat—and I think I am alone in that experience, except my honourable friend and colleague (Mr. Duthie)—on such a Board as the honourable gentleman is now proposing: I sat as an elective member of the Board which managed for a short time the affairs of the Government Insurance. That Board sat under the presidency of the Colonial Treasurer. The elective members were not without force there, but the Board was essentially a useless one. And it was so by reason of the presence of political power in the person of the Colonial Treasurer, which we could neither successfully fight against nor submit to surrender to. I

say I have sat upon a hybrid Board of that description; and I am unable to vote for this measure. I did at one time say that I could see no objection to a Minister sitting on a Board, but I specially stipulated that he should not have any greater influence, in the shape of a casting-vote, than any other Commissioner. I never should agree to such a provision as is contained in the concluding words of clause 10. So far as I have been able to judge, this Bill gives to the Minister of the day the absolute and unqualified control of the railways. What honourable gentlemen who have spoken in this debate have said is absolutely true—the Board of Commissioners will be a mere dummy, a buffer between Parliament and the Minister. He will blame the Board for any shortcomings, and he will claim the merit if there are any virtues. I very much misjudge the honourable gentleman who at present occupies the position of Minister for Public Works if he would not take that position. In the eloquent address which the honourable member for Wairau delivered to the House this afternoon—by far the pleasantest and best speech I have listened to while I have sat in my place as a member of this House—he referred to that which I believe to be the greatest danger which the policy of the present Government tends to create. The idea that democracy means the administration by the House or by a Committee of the House of the commercial undertakings of the State is essentially erroneous. This House is, from the very nature of the men who are selected, incompetent to administer such undertakings. The only hope, in my opinion—and I am only expressing the opinion which has been expressed by many great men in works upon social progress—the only hope for the organization of social effort by the State consists in the separation of that social effort from political management. There is no safety against corruption but in a separation of the control from politics. It was contended by those who supported the Elective Executive Bill that, if there is to be control and administration by this House, we must depart from the system of party government, and have the administration chosen of men who are competent to administer. If you adhere to a system of party government, then, if your control and management is to be pure and effective, if you are to discount the fear of corruption, which is the chief argument against socialism, you must have separate control, apart from political management. Your officers must be officers of Parliament, and not officers of the Government. We know one body of parliamentary officers forming a commission which has been a success in every English-speaking country: I mean the administration of the Supreme Court, or the High Court of Justice. They are officers of Parliament, and not the officers of Government. They are subject to the control of Parliament in the true sense, and exercise the power which Parliament has delegated to them from an independent position, which places them above the suspicion of fear or favour. The honourable

Mr. Bell

gentleman himself, the present Minister for Public Works, who is to be the Minister of Railways, said this session, from his place in the House, that political colour would be with him a reason for advancement in the public service.

Mr. SEDDON.—Pardon me; I said it was not as to the engaging, but the promotion of those in the service.

Mr. BELL.—That is, then, that the avenue to the public service is opened only by a gate painted with a political colour. I do not see the distinction that the honourable gentleman desires to draw.

Mr. SEDDON.—I referred to the promotion of servants.

Mr. BELL.—Very well, then; it is not to be merit alone which is to be the reason for appointment. The question of particular political opinion is to be a main factor in the opportunity which a man is to have to serve the country in any department. As one who sees without fear the accumulation of effort into the hands of the State as against that of the individual, as one who believes that to that end all our legislation is now tending, as one who desires to aid to that end and to safeguard the path we are taking, I protest that the only hope for success is that the men who have charge of the commercial undertakings of the State shall be independent of party or politics, and shall be officers of this House, holding office during good behaviour. I wish to say one word, before I sit down, with regard to a gentleman who has ceased to be a Commissioner. I have only caught one or two expressions—not so much during this debate as on previous occasions—of a character derogatory to that gentleman. I say that no more capable an administrator, no more honest or faithful servant, has the colony ever had than Mr. Maxwell. It is not the bland manner which is required for the service of the State; it is not that a man should be what one honourable gentleman has just called “easily approachable”; but what is required is that a man shall be capable of honestly, faithfully, and fearlessly doing his duty, whatever it may be. Mr. Maxwell cannot but have known that his consistent and persistent course of refusing to yield one jot to popular clamour must make for him enemies of those whose raids on the public purse he in the public interest steadfastly resisted, but, at all events, in his retirement he has the satisfaction of knowing that he has done that which he believed to be his duty, and I can only add that he did that which I too believe to have been his duty.

Mr. PIRANI.—The honourable member for Wellington City (Mr. Bell), who has just sat down, reminded us just now that the history of the grain rates was fading out of the minds of members, but it seems to me that that history must have been fading out of his own mind. He ascribed to the grain rates the commencement of the reign of the Commissioners, but those who know the history of the grain rates will remember that it was the Ministry which held office four years previous

to the one which appointed the Commissioners which was turned out of office in connection with the grain rates. To go so far back beyond the history of two Ministries to ascribe the cause for the formation of this Board is, I think, a little bit what the Americans call "too previous." We have no doubt as to what in the minds of Liberals was the reason for the formation of the Board of Commissioners, and we have no doubt that the reasons for the formation of that Board were rendered of none effect by subsequent events. I intend to vote for the second reading of the Bill, not because I believe in the principle laid down in it, but because I believe in full Ministerial control; and I trust that during the course of the Bill through Committee we shall be able to amend it in that direction. There is nothing more unsatisfactory than such a system as we have had during the last five years, and I feel confident that, had those who voted for a Board of control such as we have now for one moment thought that the men on that Board were to be selected within this colony, there would not have been half a dozen votes given for it. The object of removing the railways from political control altogether was to give an expert from abroad the chance of proving to the people of the colony that the railways could be managed without political influence better than they could be with it; but when you select men from this colony—men with colonial prejudices, and men whose associations have been with those railways, and who therefore cannot look at the management in the impartial way anticipated, you altogether depart from the real reason for the formation of that Board. Personally I do not think you can ever get perfect management from any body of men; but, with all humility, I say that you can get from an assembly of members of Parliament elected to the House—and I say that their constituents are the best people to say who is most fitted to express their views—a consensus of opinion as to the successful conduct of the railways that it is impossible to get from any other source of management.

8.30. Of course, if we have that system of meddling that obtained in past Parliaments, when men were sent here by the propertied classes simply to legislate in the interests of those propertied classes—if we are to have a repetition of that, undoubtedly political management will be bad. But I say that the men who are sent to Parliament now would not stand that sort of meddlesomeness for one moment: they would rise as one man and condemn it. And if a Minister were so weak and foolish as to give way simply for political purposes to pressure brought upon him by a few members, he would lose his seat as quickly as any officer in the public service. It would be a ridiculous waste of our time to-night to go back over the history of the Commissioners, and to show that the profit they have made on the railways has been at the expense of the railways themselves, and at the expense of the majority of the employes. I say, notwith-

standing the agitation that is being made on behalf of the Commissioners, and with a knowledge of the truth of the matter, that our railways, our rolling-stock, and our permanent-way has never been in a worse condition than they are in at the present moment. Why, you have not got to go many miles from Palmerston to see an instance of the folly of the Railway Commissioners. We had a bridge there which cost many thousands of pounds, and which was condemned; and, to remedy the evil, the Commissioners placed a new top to that bridge: they replaced the wooden girders with iron, and the ordinary totara with iron-bark; but they left the old piles, and the result was that the first flood swept the structure into the river. That is only one of many instances I could give of the way in which the Commissioners have mismanaged our railways. Engines that in any other country would be broken up for old iron are kept running on the lines when they are unfit for use. They break down over and over again simply because they are kept there to show a saving in expenditure. Then, we have boys on the permanent-way to do pick-and-shovel work at 3s. 6d. a day; and that is a sample of economical management. It would take half the night, Sir, to enumerate even briefly a catalogue of the sins of omission and commission of the Railway Commissioners. But I do not think it is our province to dwell upon that subject, or to waste time at any length upon any such enumeration. I feel assured that if we change our system of irresponsible control to a control responsible to the people of the colony we shall have far more satisfaction in the management of our lines, and the result of that management will be an improvement not only to settlement, but in the revenue of the colony.

Mr. PINKERTON.—Sir, I have only a very few remarks to offer in connection with this Bill, and I should like to say this: that if the contentions of some of the honourable gentlemen who have spoken on this question—notably, the honourable member for Wellington City (Mr. Bell) and the honourable member for Wairau—are true, then every department of the Civil Service except the Railway Department must be full of corruption. I want to know if those honourable members believe that to be the case. There are no departments now under the control of the Government but what have a political head, and therefore, if having a political head is a sign of corruption, then every other department but the Railway Department is corrupt. The honourable member for Wairau went one step further and stated that we, the members of this House, did our work so badly that, if the Government continued as they are doing now, that is a very good reason why we should not have the control of the railways. If that be true, then democratic principles are altogether wrong, and we should at once proceed to abolish Parliament and do away with this House in order to set up something else. Now, Sir, I differ entirely from such a course. I think parliamentary procedure has not yet been proved to be a failure;

and I entirely agree in the handing-over of the railways to full political control, and for this reason: I think there is a great question of principle at stake, and, in considering that, we might fairly ask ourselves whether the persons selected for members of this House can be trusted by the people, and whether the gentlemen who have also been selected by the members of this House to occupy seats on the Government benches are to become suspected as soon as they get upon those seats. Are they not as likely to carry out the business in the interests of the people of the country as any set of Commissioners that can be appointed? I do not trouble about whether the Commissioners have done right or wrong—that is, to me, a perfectly indifferent affair; but I am prepared to say this: that the Commissioners have not done better than the Government would have done in the past. Comparisons fail altogether to do justice to the case. One thing I think we ought to ask, What amount of control are the Government to have over the railways? Are the Government to have full and complete control over the railways and employes and such expert labour as they consider necessary, and be fully responsible to this House and the country for their management of the Railway Department? That, in my opinion, is what ought to be. But, if that is wrong, the only other course can be for the Government to hand the matter completely over to the Commissioners, and say, "We are in no way able to control this important department." It would be wrong to place anything between these two propositions, and to have a hybrid system, partly of Government control and partly of control by Commissioners; and, in fact, no control at all. We have for five years had no control under the Commissioners. I have nothing to say against the Commissioners; I believe the Commissioners have carried out their work faithfully and well; but the fact is, if they had been corrupt, they could have carried out their own purposes, and this House would have had no control over them. They were not tied down in the position of paid officers, as stated by the honourable member for Wellington City, and others who take that view. It seems to me to be very strange that as soon as you send members into this House they become suspected persons at once, but as soon as they occupy the Government benches they are still more suspected. I only hope the country takes no such view of the position. I am sure I have a much higher opinion of my fellow-members than to take any such view myself, and I can only think that honourable members who talk in that strain are surely not serious. About the *personnel* of the Commissioners I have very little to say—indeed, I have nothing to say. I am not at all sure, if the principle is wrong, that more Commissioners should be appointed when the term of office expires, which is very short now. I was somewhat astonished at hearing the honourable member for Ashley say more than once that the people living in the towns are the

Mr. Pinkerton

people who are demanding this change, and that the people who use the railways should be the persons to make complaints—namely, the people in the country. He stated that the people living in the cities do not use the railways. I ask, do the people living in the towns not use the railways and pay railway rates, and do they not consume a very large amount of the produce from the country? Have they not to meet to a large extent a fair proportion of the interest charged on the money expended on the railways, and something like 8 per cent. over what the money has cost? Would they not gain something by the produce being carried at a low rate between the country and the towns? Are they not the consumers of that produce? It seems to me very surprising that honourable gentlemen will talk in that foolish way. They seem to work themselves up into a certain amount of importance because they are farmers, and because they live in the country, and they seem to think that the townspeople live at their expense. Well, Sir, the sooner those people give up that idea the better it will be for themselves and for the country people. It can only have one effect, and that is, to raise up a feeling between town and country; and I say that the people who are successful in creating such a feeling are the enemies of town and country alike. When the honourable member for Eden spoke on this Bill I thought his arguments were very much weaker than any arguments I had heard him use before. He said there had been only a few grievances trotted out against the Commissioners, and that no Commissioners could be obtained to do the work under this Bill. I have no doubt, Sir, that if the Government were to ask for three gentlemen to carry on the work they could get hundreds of applicants, and I have no doubt that the gentlemen who are now Railway Commissioners would be very willing to retain office. There has also been some contention as to the action of the Government in dispensing with the services of the former Commissioners and taking on two others, and, in fact, in having Commissioners at all. But I presume the Government had very little choice in the matter—at any rate, so far as management by Commissioners is concerned. The system of Commissioners was established by the Government Railways Act passed some years ago, under which the Government were bound to work, so that it then became a question of whether they would retain the old Commissioners, or whether they would engage the services of other gentlemen who would work more harmoniously with the Government than I presume the other two gentlemen have done. Then, we had another statement, the value of which I could not tell—namely, that this was got up by paid agitators, who lived on the wages of the workmen, and who lived on unionism, and who pandered to unionism. We have heard these statements in the House before; but I have never been able to lay my hand on the shoulder of any person who is a paid agitator, or to find any portion of the

public service that is run in the interests of unionism. Unionists know, as well as the honourable gentleman who made the statement, that if they endeavour to injure any class of industry in the country they will be the first to suffer. They know that just as well as those people who take the flattering unctious to their souls that they who live in the country create the towns. I hope we shall hear very little of these arguments in future, because it can only have one effect—namely, the injury of the country at large. The state of the railways I know nothing about. I simply rose to express my opinion and explain how my vote would go, and, seeing that I have an amendment on the Order Paper which, if carried out, will have the effect of giving the control of the railway completely into the hands of the Government, I hope there will be a sufficient number of members in the House to carry that, and place the department in the same position as other departments in the State are placed. I hold that the Government is better able to manage this fifteen millions that has been invested in the railways than any set of Commissioners. I shall vote for the second reading of the Bill, with a view of giving the complete control of the railways to the Government, and with all the responsibilities.

Mr. COLLINS.—I think no more important measure than the one under consideration has yet been brought before this House, and I trust the House will pardon me if I venture for a moment or two to trespass upon its patience. I think, in discussing an important Bill like this, we should confine ourselves to the principles, and leave the details for Committee. It has been repeatedly said in the course of this discussion that this Bill is neither one thing nor another. Indeed, the honourable gentleman who first opposed the Bill made the remark that the measure reminded him in its half-heartedness of a bargain which might be struck between the seller and buyer of a horse. He said the seller might ask £20 and the buyer might offer £15, and as a rule the bargain was concluded by splitting the difference. He said this Bill was neither one thing nor another, and it reminded him of splitting the difference, in saying which I think the honourable gentleman really hit the right position. The Bill takes up neither of the two extremes, and in a sense it may be said to split the difference. As in the case of the buyer and seller of a horse, justice in all probability will be obtained when the difference is split. We cannot forget that upon the efficient control of our railways depends not only to a large extent the public convenience, but also the public welfare; and I think it will commend itself to most honourable members that the public ought to have under their direct control that which is absolutely essential to the public welfare. We have had given to us during the last few days an illustration of the value of open spaces in our cities. Open spaces have been compared to public lungs necessary for health. I think our railways may be compared to a public circulatory system, absolutely essential for a

free and fair distribution of all those products which are necessary for healthful social vitality. If that be true, then it is absolutely necessary that they should be under careful and judicious control. I think the working of our railways compares most favourably with that of other colonies. I have not a word to say in regard to the past management or mismanagement. I am willing to give the credit to the Commissioners of having managed our railways well—of having splendidly managed them; but the question is, whether that management can be improved. I am under the impression that it can be improved. The honourable member for Eden was another member who declared that the Bill was neither one thing nor another. But I think, after the speeches which have already been delivered, the honourable gentleman must be convinced of one thing, and that is the democratic nature of the Bill, which has drawn out a certain amount of hostility towards it. It has been said that the Minister appointed to the Board—the Premier for instance, if appointed—would be practically the all-powerful manager, and the Commissioners would become absolutely powerless; and, indeed, the honourable gentleman who made that statement went so far as to assert that no gentleman with a spark of manliness or spirit would take up a position as Commissioner under such circumstances. I am under the impression that under these circumstances alone shall we get a gentleman of real integrity to take up this position. These gentlemen will know that they are working side by side with one who is answerable to Parliament, and who is, through Parliament, answerable to the people of the colony. I am under the impression that that is exactly the time when we shall get men of real integrity and true public spirit to undertake this work. I believe that the time has arrived when we ought to make a decided change in the management of our railways. It was said that the Premier in his opening speech gave no reasons for this change: but one very emphatic reason may be stated. In spite of what has been said, the people of the country have demanded that a change shall be made, and, so far as this House is concerned, that ought to be a very sufficient reason for a change. The people of the country demand a change. They demand that they shall be represented in the management of the public railways. It cannot be denied, we are told, that there is some dissatisfaction throughout the country with regard to the railway management; and the honourable member for Eden, in opposing the Bill, said it could not be denied that there was such dissatisfaction. Why, if the honourable gentleman was in the habit of coming in contact with those who are the democrats in this country he would find that there is not only some but a very large amount of dissatisfaction. I for one am willing to admit that the railways are splendidly managed; but, however well they may be managed, the people will feel dissatisfied unless they are represented in the management of so important a concern as our national rail-

ways. We have been told that a Minister being on the Board will mean not the control of the railways by the users but by the workers; but I undertake to say that if the workers are not a majority of the users they are very largely the users of the railways. Anyhow, the workers of this colony are the majority—a very largely preponderating majority; and if it be said that this transference of power means transferring the government of the railways from the users to the workers, then it means the transfer of the working of the railways from the minority to the majority. I think that is a very just transference. It means not only transferring the management from the users to the workers, but it means giving to the users and the workers a voice in the control of our railways. It means giving the control to the people. It means giving the control to the producers as well as to the consumers. It means giving the control to one and all throughout the entire length and breadth of this colony. Then, we had a very pretty speech from the honourable member for Wairau. I must confess I was charmed with that speech. He said, in the course of that very neat speech, that this Bill proposed to abolish the government of the last five years. Even if I were convinced that the government of the last five years was without a flaw, under the present circumstances I should feel bound, at any rate, to vote for the second reading of this Bill. I do not say that the Bill is in every respect complete; I do not say that it is all I could desire it to be; I do not say that I should not be prepared to vote for certain amendments in Committee; but I do maintain that, even if the honourable gentleman had successfully proved his point,—that this was a proposal to abolish the system of the last five years,—I should still fail to see that that is any adequate reason why we should reject this measure. He said it would enable the Premier to dominate the whole situation, and he said, at the same time, that it would be a cross between political and non-political control. I fail to see how these two statements can be reconciled. I fail absolutely to see, while it will enable the Premier to dominate the whole situation—even should the Premier occupy a position on the Board, even should that course be decided upon by the House—that that would not be a better system than the one which now obtains. Under the present circumstances, I think it is scarcely to be expected that the Premier should be the sole manager of our railway system; but, working with the Commissioners, he would keep their work in touch with the wishes of the people expressed through their representatives in this House, and I think that is a very desirable thing. Parliamentary control, it was said by the honourable gentleman, means muddling railway management. He said, in proof of that statement, that this House was apt to muddle. Did not this House so muddle some of its measures that, session after session, it had to undo, alter, and amend what it had previously done? I think that is to the credit of the House. If

Mr. Collins

it makes a mistake one session, at least it endeavours to rectify it the next. I think it is one of the glories and advantages of a democratic Parliament that if it make a mistake it is honest enough to admit the fact, and endeavour to rectify the error. Are our railways managed at present by those who are infallible in their power of management? I venture to say, however well they manage, no one will state that they are endowed with infallible powers of management. It will be a good thing to have a Minister in this House who will see, if mistakes are made or faults committed, that those mistakes are altered or amended. I do not for one moment think that a Minister holding a seat with the Commissioners will mean the muddling of our railway management. Then, we are told that it gives the Premier unlimited control without corresponding responsibility; but assuredly this is absolutely absurd. To give the Minister unlimited control must carry with it a corresponding responsibility. The greater the power of control by one who represents this House the greater the responsibility; and I undertake to say that, if mismanagement takes place with the Premier occupying the position of a Commissioner of Railways, the Premier will assuredly have to answer to this House for muddling and mismanagement.

9.0. I undertake to say so. Then, again, it has been said that the Commissioners have done so much that there is no reason why we should alter the present condition of affairs. It has been said that they have reduced rates. I will admit that the Commissioners have done much; I will admit that they have reduced the rates; but, Sir, how have the Commissioners reduced rates? Those who know anything at all about the management of our railways during the past few years will have to admit with me that very much may be said on behalf of the management of the Commissioners, but that very much that has taken place and that is taking place in connection with the railways is very sincerely to be regretted. Why, it was only a few days ago that, from my seat in this House, I asked a question as to how much longer the people in the railway workshops would be kept working short time. They may well reduce expenditure, well show lessened expenses, if they are keeping the men working short time in the workshops; and it would be possible to still further reduce the expenditure if they are going on in that manner. I could point out that not only has the time worked been shortened in such a manner as to scarcely leave workmen able to fulfil their financial engagements, but I could point out that very much boy-labour has been utilised within the last few years, and that very much of the labour of those who have families depending upon them has been displaced, very much to the hurt of those who have been working in the railway workshops. I might, if I chose, draw the attention of the House to statements contained in the blue-books, in order to point out how it is that the railways have been carried on at a very considerably reduced expense, but I will not weary

the House with details of that kind. I may repeat that it is quite an easy matter by working short time, by using boy-labour instead of labour of men with families depending upon them, by discharging a large number of hands and not filling up their places, by allowing hands to die out and still further failing to fill their places, all of which could be substantially proved by a reference to the blue-books—it would be an easy matter to show how in this way the railways have been economically worked. Although they may have been economically worked, we have had ample proof during the course of the day that they have not been as efficiently maintained as they should have been; and I think members of this House ought to be quite satisfied to come to a decision with regard to a matter such as is suggested in the proposal brought down by the Government. I shall vote for the second reading of this Bill, although, as I have said before, I shall give its details very serious consideration when it goes into Committee.

Mr. MILLS.—It is a very difficult matter in speaking on this Bill to sever the names of the Commissioners, or even a reference to them, from the discussion of this measure. I will preface my remarks by saying that, so far as the Commissioners are concerned, I have always found them most courteous and obliging; and, as there is so small a portion of railway in my district, I have not had a great number of complaints, and therefore I can speak impartially with regard to the management. I hold that the broad principle we have to discuss this evening is the question of State ownership and State management. I have heard nothing from the Opposition benches which would lead me to think that it was better now to continue the system of control that has been going on for the past five years. I have heard a great deal said with regard to the term "autocratic power"—as sought for by the Minister. Sir, who created anything like autocratic power? Why, it was created in the Bill of 1887, when the railways were vested in the Commissioners. Surely we cannot ask for more autocratic power than was given to the Chairman of these Commissioners. It has not been alluded to during this discussion, but I would point out, to those who have not read the Government Railways Act of 1887, that clause 11, subsection (3), says,—

"If the Chief Commissioner differ from the other two Commissioners with respect to any matter before the Commissioners for their decision and determination, such matter shall be deferred for not less than twenty-four hours, when it shall be again brought forward; and, in the event of the Chief Commissioner again differing from the other two Commissioners, such matter of difference shall be determined according to the deliberate judgment of the Chief Commissioner, irrespective of the opinion of the other two Commissioners; and he shall in all such cases enter upon the minutes of the proceedings of the Commissioners his reasons, at length, for deciding such matter in opposition to the other two Commissioners, and

shall forward to the Minister a true copy of such minute."

Well, Sir, does that clause contain autocratic power or not? Decidedly it does; there is no question about it. But this Bill confers no more power than we have in connection with all local bodies. The Chairmen of the Land Boards, of the Education Boards, of the County Councils, and of all local bodies, have each the privilege given them of exercising a deliberative and a casting vote; and nothing more is sought for in this Bill. To my mind, the measure does not go far enough. I used to think that a non-political Board would be the best to manage our railways. I have watched it carefully now for some years, and gradually, and without prejudice, I have come to the conclusion that this House ought not to shirk its own responsibility. Are there six men in this House, let us ask ourselves—businessmen—who would spend fifteen or sixteen millions of money and then appoint three outsiders to take charge of their valuable asset, and give them the control—the sole control—of it for five years, without being able to advise them in their management? Sir, I doubt very much if there is one who would do it. At any rate, I, for one, would not. I should like to have a voice, and a big voice too, in the management of the money I had invested, more especially if the other three had put nothing into it but their experience. Otherwise, Sir, I should think it would result in a repetition of the old story of Jack and Jim, who went into partnership, one with experience and the other with money, and in the end it was found that the man who had the money had gained the experience and his friend the money. Well, Sir, a great deal has been said in the discussion about political control. I should like to understand more clearly what is meant by political control. Is there to be no legislation—is there to be no provision by legislation to guard and surround this large system of railway working with such reasonable regulations as would be provided for, let me say, the Post Office or Telegraph Office, or any other department this Parliament has to deal with? I venture to say there would be. This House will not for a moment take charge of the railways and place them in the hands of a Minister, leaving him to do whatever he chooses in their management; at any rate, it will surprise me if they do attempt to do so. So far as I can gather, Sir, the voice of the country at the last elections was expressed fairly and determinedly. The country has not been satisfied with the past management of the railways, and I believe there is a feeling that they would like to see the railways put in closer touch with the policy of the Government, and that in opening up a district the Government would be able to explain to this House that they have not altogether studied pounds shillings and pence in running certain portions of the lines. In that way, at any rate, a great many did speak during the last elections, and those who gave expression to those opinions have, I believe, been returned as repre-

sentatives to this House with the full idea that that would be carried out. Before sitting down I would just allude to an unpleasant matter. I think honourable members, in discussing a Bill of this kind, should, at any rate, avoid what has been apparent in one speech—a strong vein of bitter personal feeling. I am very sorry that has been the character of even one speech I have listened to during this debate, and I should like to see my young friend the honourable member for Wairau present, because I believe that in his calmer moments he will realise that he did use expressions that were unjustifiable. While claiming honesty of purpose for ourselves, we should readily credit other honourable members with the same. If we wish to differ, let us agree to differ fairly. I am firmly convinced that the Premier is just as earnest in his way of thinking, and as honest in his belief that it would be an advantage to the country to resume control of our railways in the way indicated by this Bill—or, as he said the other evening, by the pure and sole control of the State—as I am in the views I have expressed myself. I think it is only fair and right to credit him with the same honesty of purpose and the same desire for the interests of the country as we claim for ourselves.

Mr. J. W. KELLY.—I desire to say a few words before the question is put. I have very much pleasure in supporting the Bill now before the House, reserving to myself the right to vote for the amendment proposed by the honourable member for Dunedin City (Mr. Pinkerton). I certainly am in favour of State control pure and simple, or of Commissioners pure and simple, and I think in that respect the Bill is somewhat defective. However, that is more a matter for Committee, where I shall vote for the proposal notice of which has been given by Mr. Pinkerton. I would also support an additional Minister being appointed by this House, and having one Commissioner less upon the Board. That, I think, would simplify matters. Let there be one Commissioner appointed as general manager for each Island, and let there be an additional Minister appointed whose whole and sole duty shall be the management of the railways. That, I think, would be a very much better plan, and I would support any proposal in that direction. The present Commissioners no doubt have done a great deal of good in the way of retrenchment, but very much more could be done, I am sure, without hurting the efficiency of the railway service. We have often heard from the Premier about the amalgamation of the Public Works Department with the Department of Working Railways. Now, if this Bill becomes law, which I hope it will do during the present session, I trust whoever is the Minister on the Board will see it to be his duty to have the two departments amalgamated. With regard to the question of classification mentioned by the honourable member for Riccarton, that is a matter respecting which the officers of the service feel that they are at a great disadvantage as compared with the officials of the

Postal and Telegraph Department, and I know of cases of great injustice which have taken place to various officials through want of a proper classification of the service; and I hope this will be a matter for the attention of the Minister, whoever he may be, who is placed in charge of the railways. There was a matter mentioned by the honourable member for New Plymouth which applies specially to the district that I represent. I refer to the haulage rates on gravel for local bodies. In my district, will honourable members believe it?—as much as 6s. 6d. per yard is paid for gravel to put on roads. Every one will admit that such a price is really prohibitive, and I have no hesitation in saying that it would pay the Government to haul gravel for nothing at all when it is to be used by local bodies, because when roads are made giving settlers access to the railways it will encourage settlers to make their land more productive in every way; and I say the extra amount of produce raised would repay the Government for any loss entailed through hauling gravel for nothing. The honourable member for Hawke's Bay, in speaking on the Bill, stated that the salaries of employes in the service had been raised somewhat since the Commissioners took office. Of this there can be no doubt; but there is one thing of which I have complained in the House again and again—that, while the salaries of officials are raised, the wages-men have received no increase whatever in their rate of pay. I have admitted that there is some difficulty in having anything like an annual increase in wages the same as in salaries; but I say that some satisfactory plan ought to be adopted whereby the wages-men could reach a certain maximum after serving a given number of years with a good record; and, in reference to the wages-men in the railway service, I think that is one matter which requires looking into. The statements made by the honourable member for Eden have been dealt with by the honourable member for Dunedin City, and I shall pass them over. In regard to the honourable member for Wairau, I regret that he has departed altogether from his usual custom in this House. The able speech he delivered was marred to a considerable extent by the severe abuse which he heaped upon the Premier. I am sorry to say his whole speech was one long tirade of misrepresentations of the Premier. He stated time after time that the Premier's whole intention in regard to this Act was to get the railways into his own hands for the sake of the patronage it would bring; and he also said the Premier had already so much to do that he would find it an impossibility to manage the railways. The Premier stated in the House that it was not his intention to become Minister of Railways, and I think the honourable member for Wairau might have accepted that statement from the Premier. One other remark my young friend made which I was sorry to hear. He said that the railway servants have grievances, and would bring pressure to bear upon honourable members to bring such grievances on the floor of this House, which

Mr. Mills

would abolish all discipline, and encourage unprincipled agitators. Now, we can put up with the words "unprincipled agitators" from members of the Opposition, because it comes from them with a good grace, but from my young friend the honourable member for Wairau it comes with a very bad grace. These terrible agitators, of which we hear a little, exist only in the minds of the honourable gentlemen who make the statements. And honourable members seem also to forget, when they state as one of the reasons for opposing political control that the House will be filled with the grievances of the railway men—when they state that, they forget that we have during this session passed a Bill called the Industrial Conciliation Bill, which gives the railway servants the opportunity of bringing their grievances before a Board, and will altogether free the House from such grievances being brought on the floor of the House for discussion. Now, before I sit down, I want to say a word or two about a remark made by the senior member for Wellington City. He returned to a charge which he partly withdrew a few weeks ago. He made a statement in his speech on this Bill wherein he said a black list had been prepared by the railway union in Christchurch—that he had seen it.

Sir R. STOUT.—I have a copy of it.

Mr. J. W. KELLY.—He also stated that one person whose name was on that list had been dismissed: and that there were the names of several persons who were to be promoted, and that it was submitted to the Commissioners. When the statement was made I deemed it my duty to immediately send a telegram to the executive of the railway union in Christchurch, and here is the reply from the secretary of the Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants: "Sir R. Stout's statement utterly false."

Mr. SPEAKER.—I think you read something to that effect before. I do not think it is at all a proper thing to read from a person outside this House a reflection on what is said by a member of this House: that would be permitting a person outside the House to use language towards a member that one member could not use with regard to a fellow-member.

Mr. J. W. KELLY.—Well, Sir, I will say that I have received information which states that there is no foundation for the statement. The executive demand that a Committee shall be set up to consider this case for the express purpose of clearing the members of the railway union from the serious charge which the senior member for Wellington City brought against them on the floor of the House—

Sir R. STOUT.—I am very glad to hear it.

Mr. J. W. KELLY.—I am very glad also the request has been made, and I shall give notice for the Committee to-morrow.

Sir R. STOUT.—Send it to the Railways Committee.

Mr. J. W. KELLY.—I am quite willing to send it to any Committee of the House, because I am confident it will turn out as I say—that the honourable gentleman has been entirely

misled by some person who has been retrenched from the service, and who, for want of facts, has drawn upon his imagination. I will also go further and say, with regard to the honourable gentleman's statement that the said list was submitted to the Commissioners, that I have the authority of the Commissioners to state—

Sir R. STOUT.—The whole of them?

Mr. J. W. KELLY.—I have the authority of the Railway Commissioners to state that the statement made by the honourable gentleman is absolutely without foundation; that they are prepared to come before any Committee of the House which may be appointed and give evidence upon oath to this effect. I will say no more on this point, seeing that the matter is likely to be investigated by a Committee, but will reserve any further remarks until the report is before the House. I deemed it my duty to say this much on behalf of the railway union, as a very serious charge has been made against them by the honourable member; and I hope that members generally will not come to any decision on the matter until the evidence is before them. I have very much pleasure in supporting the second reading of the Bill, with the amendment of the honourable member for Dunedin City (Mr. Pinkerton).

Mr. O'REGAN.—To guard against misinterpretation hereafter, I desire to have it particularly understood that no remarks I shall make concerning the Bill before the House are to apply to the Commissioners in a personal sense. I refuse to believe a great deal that has been said against the integrity of those gentlemen; but my own opinion as to the management of the railways is, that the railways should be entirely under the control of Parliament, and that the Railway Commissioners should be abolished altogether. On the principle of taking something that goes in this direction, I intend to vote for the second reading of the Bill, although when it is in Committee it is also my intention to move for the taking-out of the word "three," in clause 2, for the purpose of inserting therein the word "two." I think if a Minister is upon the Board one Commissioner can well be dispensed with. I have listened with a great deal of pleasure to this debate, and also with a great deal of interest, because of the diverse opinions that have been expressed. According to some honourable gentlemen there is something horrible in the idea of political control. If we are to believe what is said about the moral calibre of politicians they are a most degraded lot. A man, in order to become utterly demoralised, must become a member of Parliament; and, in order to become finally degraded, he must find his way to the Treasury benches. That is the opinion we must entertain if we are to believe what has been said about the integrity of honourable gentlemen, and their fitness for administering the affairs of the colony. Now, honourable members who talk in this way should be consistent. If the railways should not be under the direct control of Parliament,

then why do they not object—as they would if they were consistent—against the Postal and Telegraph Department being controlled by a Minister? And why do they not also object to the manner in which the Insurance Department and Public Trust Office and the Lands and Survey Department are administered? All these offices are under political control, they are managed in the interests of the people, and, logically, there is no reason to believe that the railways could not be managed in a similar way. Where does the autocracy come in? Are not Ministers always responsible to Parliament and, through Parliament, to the people? Even had they no scruples of conscience Ministers are sure to be careful to avoid irreparable disgrace. They, in their own interest, will diligently guard against conduct which would render them for ever unable to rehabilitate themselves. Some honourable members seem to attach paramount importance to the financial aspect of the railway question. To my mind the chief consideration is the public convenience. No doubt a certain amount of consideration must be paid to the financial aspect of the railways; but they are just as much a public convenience as the main roads of the colony; they are the property of the people, and should be controlled by the people's representatives. I was surprised the other evening in listening to the honourable member for Hawke's Bay. He expressed an opinion—or, rather, I think I am correct in saying that he laid it down as an absolute fact—that the experience of other countries has shown that private management is superior to management by the State. I was surprised to hear that honourable gentleman, with all his political experience, express himself in favour of the railways being managed by monopolists whose first consideration is gain. What is the experience of America? It is pre-eminently the land of monopolists, pre-eminently the happy hunting-ground of rings and of millionaires. And why is this? Because private individuals have been allowed to control the railways and kindred institutions. The experience of the civilised world shows that railways, being a monopoly, should always be controlled by Government. One of the greatest curses that could ever befall any country would be to allow the railways to get into the hands of a company, and I hope no one will ever have the temerity to propose that the railways of the colony shall be controlled by any company. The surprise I experienced in listening to that honourable gentleman was equalled by that which seized me in listening to my honourable friend the member for Wairau this afternoon. It certainly seemed somewhat strange that the honourable gentleman, after holding the position of organizer of the National Liberal Association and acting as Government Whip, could round so severely on the Premier. If I held such a poor opinion of the Premier I would go into opposition at once. The honourable gentleman says it is not men, it is measures. Well, judging from the tenor of his speech, it certainly was men and not mea-

Mr. O'Regan

asures, because the speech, to a large extent, was a personal attack upon the Premier. He said he agreed entirely with the honourable member for Eden; yet that honourable gentleman told the House, in the most emphatic manner, that he was in favour of having the Minister on the Board of Commissioners. If my honourable friend agreed with the honourable member for Eden, why did he condemn the idea of the Premier having a seat on the Board of Commissioners? Certainly it seems to me his speech was inconsistent. His tragic eloquence no doubt had some effect on the House, and upon me it had an effect for the time being, but a very superficial one. The honourable member for Ellesmere, also, expressed the opinion that the railways should be free from political control, and he said that no one should have control of the railways except some one who was to be trusted. My answer to that is this: that any one who is not trustworthy is not fit to be on the Ministerial benches. If Ministers are untrustworthy they should not be there, and therefore not upon any Board of Railway Commissioners. But, although I am not a blind follower of those honourable gentlemen, although sometimes it is my duty to act the candid friend, I refuse to believe that any honourable gentleman on the Treasury benches is unfit to have a seat on the Board of Railway Commissioners.

An Hon. MEMBER.—It is a new Minister.

Mr. O'REGAN.—I have no desire to be a Minister.

An Hon. MEMBER.—I said it was to be a new Minister.

Mr. O'REGAN.—I ask pardon. I understood the honourable gentleman to say that they should make me a Minister. I have no desire to be a Minister, because evidently the Ministerial benches are not beds of roses, and a man who aspires to be a Minister must have a cuticle as thick as that of the ordinary rhinoceros. I believe the railways of the colony should be controlled by the people's representatives. I mean no reflection upon the Railway Commissioners, but I say, without fear of contradiction, that the railways are not now under the control of the people. They are managed by an irresponsible Board. Those gentlemen may act well according to their lights, but in any case they should always be responsible to the people. They should be responsible to Parliament, and for that reason—to allow Parliament to have a voice in the management of the railways of the colony—I intend to vote for the second reading of the Bill.

Mr. HALL.—I do not propose to take up much of the time of the House by what I have to say, but several references have been made to the efficiency or inefficiency of the working of the railways under the Commissioners, and I should like to refer briefly to what has come directly under my own notice in regard to this matter. Take, for instance, the platelayers. I know that in many instances the platelayers work considerably longer hours than people in ordinary private employment;

that their holidays are abridged to something like three days in the year; they are subject to the inclemency of the weather on all occasions, and are treated in a way in which no ordinary employer would treat them. I know that these workmen have applied to the Commissioners to be relieved from some of these hardships, but the Commissioners have taken no notice of their complaints. I consider, myself, that, had these railways been under the control of the Government, such a state of things as existed would not have existed. And, again, take, for instance, the night-allowance made to railway servants when they are away from their homes. A case came under my own observation the other day where some men were sent away from their homes to do certain work. Two of these were of the lowest grade. The amount of expenses allowed them was 8s. 6d. a night, and their actual expenses came to 4s. 6d. a night. The higher-grade servants received 10s. for the night. They remained in the same hotel; their expenses could only be the same, and they pocketed the balance. The other day I put a question on the Order Paper asking the Minister why such a state of things should exist, and the reply came in the usual way from the Commissioners. There was no altering the thing if the Commissioners thought proper that such a state of things should exist. Now, under the direct control of the Government, the Government would be answerable for that. Then, with regard to the stoppage of trains. We all know the predicament the train was put in by the slips which occurred some time ago in the Manawatu Gorge. No engine-driver is allowed to back his train away; consequently by remaining in the gorge, blocked between two landlips, the lives of the passengers were endangered for five or six hours. Now, any Railway Commissioner with an ordinary sense of the circumstances and danger of such a case as this would make provision whereby in the future such a state of things would be averted; but, of course, the Railway Commissioners are not answerable to this House, therefore questions put in this House with a view to remedying such a state of things have been entirely ignored. A great deal has been said in this House by the honourable member for Caversham with reference to the condition of the bridges on the railways. I am not prepared to say anything about that myself, but can, from my own personal knowledge, refer to a matter which occurred on the Napier Section of the railways a short time ago. The end of the bridge—a very expensive and long one—crossing the Waipawa River was washed away by a flood. It was well known to all the people in that district that the bridge was menaced. The river kept encroaching, and the Maoris who saw it tried to protect their village by cutting ditches leading to the centre: and any one having a knowledge of what was likely to happen under the circumstances could see that the bridge would be endangered if this river was allowed to take its course without provision being made to keep it

in the centre. The result was that two spans of the bridge were washed away. That occasioned great loss to the Government and great inconvenience to the public. The Commissioners, instead of remedying the inconvenience, actually increased and intensified it to those using the railway. The usual tariff for the carriage of wool from Woodville to Napier was 6s. 8d. per bale right through. Now, after this occurrence the Railway Commissioners charged a rate of 5s. a bale to Waipukurau. The owner of the wool had to carry it seven miles and a half extra, for which he paid 1s. 6d. per bale; and then the Commissioners charged a further 3s. 11d. for the remainder of the journey to Napier, making altogether 10s. 5d. a bale. Now, the Commissioners could have carried this wool to the end of the bridge, five miles further along; but they left it at Waipukurau, and so entailed this distance of cartage. The people who felt the inconvenience of this did not ask the Commissioners about it. They knew that if they appealed to them it would be all in vain—that if they appealed again and again they would get nothing in the way of concession; and what did they do? No concession came from the Commissioners, and any concession that was made to the people always came from the Minister for Public Works. Now, had the Government had a voice in this matter, or the control of the railways, all this kind of thing would have been prevented. Coming to the Bill itself, I think the commercial phase of this question is by far the most important. As it has already been put by honourable gentlemen, what private individual in this House would care to place his business in the hands of three managers for five years without having any control or voice in the business during that time? My constituents are much concerned in this railway-management question. They say the railway servants on the section of line in my district have not had fair-play. They are grumbling and complaining that they are overworked, and have not had proper consideration extended to them; and after what I have stated to-night there may be some truth in what they say. The commercial aspect of the question is of great importance to this country. If we want to develop this country the produce should be placed on the market at a reasonable rate, and when I say "market" I mean the markets of the world. It is absolutely necessary we should reduce the rates of carriage, so that the products of the country may be sent to the Home markets at rates which will insure a profit to producers. Take, for instance, the dairy industry. I am satisfied that if you want that industry to be successful you must enable the people engaged in it to send their cream and butter at nominal rates, so that it may not only arrive at the centres of population in a good condition, but that it may be placed on the market at prices which will satisfy the consumer, and pay the people who produce it. There is another matter which I hope to see very much remedied in the future, whether the railways remain

under the control of the Commissioners or not, and that is with regard to the number of trains leaving each station in the colony. Take, for instance, the Napier Section of railway, which I am most conversant with. I believe trains leave Hastings for Napier five times a day. What right have the people of Hastings to the privilege of so many trains? Trains leave Waipawa, thirty miles further up, three or four times a day; and a hundred miles further up the line you find that only one train a day leaves that place. I maintain that the people at long distances away have a right to the same privileges as those who live nearer to the towns. I do not think we should take altogether into consideration the expense, because these lines have been constructed at the expense of the whole colony, and the whole colony has to pay taxation upon them. It is well known they have never paid half the interest upon the cost of their construction. And therefore I say that, if the people of the colony as a whole have to pay the deficit in the interest on the railways, then they have a perfect right to an equal share in the benefits derived from them. Now, I think the proposal to institute a Minister of the Crown as the third or fourth Commissioner in the management of the railways is a step in the right direction, because we can all see this: that there is a tendency to place everything, not only carriage by land, but also by sea, in the hands of the State; and, I may not be prophesying aright, but I think that eventually the State will become not only the sole carrier but the sole distributor of the whole of the produce of the colony. It is, of course, a big question, and it may be a long time before it is brought about, but everything is tending in that direction. We can see the banks are coming under the wing of the State, and the railways and shipping and many other things will come also beneath the wing of the State. That being so, we may well infer that this is a step in the right direction, and will give satisfaction to the community; and for that reason I shall vote for the amendment to give the State the full control of the railways, without any Commissioners whatever. The Minister of the day will be amenable to the country for the working of the railways, and we can apply to him to remedy any evils of which we may have reason to complain.

Mr. MASSEY.—Before you put the question, Sir, I should like to say a word or two on the principle of the Bill, although, after listening to the various speakers, I am not sure whether we are discussing the Bill or Mr. Pinkerton's amendment. There is one thing clear to me, and that is that the question being debated is one of political *versus* non-political control of the railways. At present, as we all know, the management of the railways is vested in three independent Commissioners, who are chosen because of their fitness and experience, and because they are supposed to be able to run the railways on business lines and commercial principles. Now, I cannot see very much objection to the present system, and, further,

Mr. Hall

I think the Commissioners have honestly done their best for the interests of the colony, and that they have been fairly successful in so doing. We must remember that there has been a great deal to contend with during their term of office, as, owing to the falling-off in the production of cereals, principally wheat, the railway revenue has been affected very considerably. Wheat, for instance, was formerly one of the chief sources of railway revenue; but, owing to the falling-off in prices, very little is produced at the present time. Then, the low prices of our staple products, and the consequent depression, have affected railway revenue in other ways, as it has diminished the spending-power of the people. The result is that our country settlers have not so much to spend in travelling and upon goods which would pay carriage as they had formerly. Besides, the mere fact that a great many of the country settlers have gone in for dairy-farming or sheep-farming instead of the production of cereals also seriously affects the railway revenue, inasmuch as a pound's worth of butter, or cheese, or wool will pay less freight than a pound's worth of wheat or oats. Taking into consideration these various drawbacks, I think the Railway Commissioners have been fairly successful. At all events, they have made the railways pay a fair rate of interest on the cost of construction. According to a return supplied to honourable members a few days ago, we are told that the interest paid by the railways last year was £2 17s. 9d. per cent., and that the year before they took office the rate was £2 6s. per cent.; so that they have made a considerable improvement in that respect; and, in spite of what was said to the contrary, I know that the permanent-way and rolling-stock have been maintained in good order.

An Hon. MEMBER.—No.

Mr. MASSEY.—I can speak for the North Island, at all events.

An Hon. MEMBER.—What about the bridges in the South?

Mr. MASSEY.—I do not know anything about the bridges in the South, but I know that the permanent-way and rolling-stock in the Auckland Province are in particularly good order at the present time. I do not mean to say that the management of the Commissioners has been perfection: it would be too much to expect perfection from anything human; and I can think of several instances where the convenience of the public might have been studied a little more than it was. There is, for instance, a matter which was brought before the House a few days ago—the fact that people living in the northern suburbs of Auckland cannot get a train that will take them to town in time for their business, and back again, so that those whose business requires them to be in the city before eight o'clock in the morning find themselves compelled to use the omnibuses. The same thing happens after five o'clock in the evening—there is no train available, and they have to take to the 'bus. I think it should be the duty of the Commissioners to

run the trains at such times that those engaged in business in the city may be able to use them. I think, too, that freights and fares should be so low that it would be impossible for vehicles drawn by horses to compete with them. We have all noticed that in the neighbourhood of the larger cities the majority of the travelling public use the omnibuses and trams. I do not think it is good business policy—in fact, it is the height of folly—for the managers of our railways to allow their carriages sometimes to run empty, when they see the 'buses crowded in all directions, and when, by making a reduction of, say, 25 per cent. in certain of the fares, the traffic would probably soon be doubled. I think too that it would pay the Commissioners to carry articles such as seeds, bonedust, manure, lime, and all that sort of thing at merely nominal rates, as, by increasing the productiveness of the soil, for every ton of bonedust that they carry one season they may reasonably expect to carry four or five tons of produce back again the following season. I think, also, that something may be done to enable the settlers who live at a distance from the centres to hire a truck and load it with the different articles they use on the farm, charging them for the truck-load instead of charging the schedule rates for each article. I believe that an arrangement of this sort would be a great convenience to the settlers, and I do not think the Commissioners would lose anything by it. Though I should like to see fares and freights reduced as far as possible, I do not advocate that the railways should be run at a loss. We must remember that only a portion of the people of the colony can use the railways. This is especially the case in the North Island, where many of the settlers live at a distance of fifty or a hundred miles from the railways, and therefore cannot use them. Now, if the railways are run at a loss, the people who live at a distance are taxed to make up the deficiency, which would simply mean that they are to be expected and called upon to pay for the benefits which are received by those who live within reach of the railways and who make use of them. I hardly think that would be fair. This brings me to a point which we must ever keep in view—namely, that the railways should be made to pay a fair rate of interest on the cost of their construction, and at the same time give the greatest possible convenience to the public. At present the railway management is in the hands of experts, but this Bill provides that a Minister of Railways shall be appointed, who will have a seat on the Board of Commissioners, with a dual vote—a deliberative and a casting vote. Now, this proposal seems to me to be a dangerous one. I think it is putting too much power in the hands of the Minister, inasmuch as he only requires one Commissioner to vote with him in order that he may dominate the whole concern. Now, Sir, as the Ministry have the power to appoint and dismiss the Commissioners, we can easily imagine that the Minister of Railways will be allowed to have his own way. He will, in fact,

be the master of the whole concern, and the Commissioners will be merely the buffer between him and the public. I most distinctly object to that, though with a Board of four I can easily understand that circumstances may arise, where a conflict takes place on the Board, when two may be on one side and two on the other. But if the Minister is to assist in the management of the railways I do not see any reason for three Commissioners. I think that two would be sufficient, and by having the Minister on the Board we shall have a Board of three. If this were done I do not think there could be very much objection to it. But, objectionable as I think it would be in many ways to have the railways under the control of the Minister, I should very much prefer to see that course adopted than to see carried the hybrid and mongrel proposals of the present Bill. The whole subject seems to me to hinge on the question whether the railways can be managed successfully with or without political control. I do not think they can be managed successfully under the control of the Minister. For instance, if we are to have Ministerial control every supporter of the Ministry will have some friends who are anxious to get billets, and circumstances may, in fact will, arise when the Minister will find it impossible to resist the demands of his supporters, or perhaps I should say the demands of those honourable gentlemen who take up the position of sitting on a rail, and who are willing to sell their support to the highest bidder. The consequence of that will be that vacancies will be filled up with men who are taken on, not on account of their fitness for the position, but because they are friends and supporters of the party who may happen to be in power. Therefore, instead of having an efficient staff to man our railways as at present, they will be manned by those who are of what may be termed "the right colour," and every employé who happens to be of the wrong colour will live in continual fear and dread of losing his position, and will be afraid of being dismissed to make room for some more favoured individual. In my opinion political control and management cannot possibly be satisfactory, but, on the other hand, I think that we are likely to obtain the best results under the control of the Commissioners, men who will be selected on account of their fitness and experience. I do not think it is a good plan to appoint the whole of the Commissioners at one time, and I think that some arrangement may be made by which one Commissioner would be appointed every two years, or perhaps one every year, if necessary. By an arrangement such as I have suggested every Ministry would have the opportunity of appointing a Commissioner, and I think that the Board of Commissioners would be kept more in touch with the House than it seems to me it is at present. There is no getting away from one fact, and that is, that the working of the railways depends on the experience and capacity of the men who have the management. Such being the case, we are more likely to get good results from the management of

three experienced and capable men, such as we have at present, than from the management of a Minister who may know nothing of the railways, and who may be dependent upon his subordinates for advice and guidance. Any one of us who has to leave our business for a time would look around to obtain the services of some one who has had sufficient experience in our particular line of business to be able to carry it on satisfactorily in our absence. We should hardly expect a storekeeper to manage a farm with the best results, nor should we expect a farmer to obtain the best results from the management of a store. Such being the case, how can we reasonably expect a Minister, who may be a journalist or a lawyer, to manage successfully sixteen millions' worth of railways and the thousands of men employed on those railways? Even if the Minister were likely to be successful in managing the railways, an expert, or a Board of experts, would be much more likely to succeed. I have no patience with those who talk about the people managing their own railways. I admit, of course, that the railways belong to the people; I admit that the people are shareholders in the railways; but do the shareholders of a bank, or of a company, manage the business for themselves? No; they appoint the best men available, and give them every assistance in their power; and that is what we ought to do in connection with our railways. Whatever changes may be made, I firmly believe the principle of a non-political Board is right, and that it should be adhered to. At the same time I feel that it is useless to do more than protest in this matter, as the Premier has made up his mind to run the railways, and he is going to do so, whether assisted by a Board of Commissioners or whether he does it by himself;

10.0. and I do not think that it will be possible to convince him that he is making a mistake until the House and the colony have to face a big deficiency.

Mr. SEDDON.—Sir, it is an unexpected pleasure for me, at this hour of the evening, to have the opportunity of replying. I may say, concerning the debate that has taken place upon this Bill, I am pleased with it, with one or two exceptions. The debate is most creditable to all concerned. As I said when I moved the second reading, we are dealing with a large and most important question, and it behoves every member of the House to deal with it as such. I must say that very little has been said that would lead those who desire to do away with the Commissioners to change their views in respect to having parliamentary control so far as the railways of the colony are concerned. The leader of the Opposition told the House on Friday night that there was not the usual fire in my speech, and he attributed that to the lateness of the proceedings of the night before; but if he had been here this afternoon, and had heard the special pleading of his colleague the honourable member for Eden,—who was mainly instrumental in taking the railways from the people in 1887,—then he would have said that my speech contrasted most favour-

ably with the speech made by the honourable member.

Hon. MEMBERS.—No, no.

Mr. SEDDON.—It was not a speech at all; it was a confession of wrongdoing; it was an apology for injuries done in taking the railways from the people. There was not a single argument used in favour of continuing the present unsatisfactory condition of affairs, and when he admitted, as he did most emphatically, that it was a correct and proper thing to have a Minister on the Board with the Railway Commissioners he admitted the whole contention against placing the railways under the control of three irresponsible persons; and therefore it is admitted that what I have done ever since 1887 in respect to the people having a voice in the control of the railways is correct. The honourable member for Eden did me the justice of saying that I have been consistent. I did all I could against the wrong being done to the people in 1887, and from that day to this I have never lost an opportunity of pointing out the wrong which was then done. I ask the people to have confidence in themselves, and to have confidence in those who represent them, because very much of the prosperity of the country depends upon the railways. What have we had against that? What led to this change in 1887? I say it was the Ministers who were then on these benches, and who were afraid to trust themselves.

An Hon. MEMBER.—No.

Mr. SEDDON.—I say so absolutely; it was simply because, some years ago, a Ministry committed an error of judgment in raising the grain rates, as has been referred to to-night; and I assert that these Ministers were afraid something was going to happen, and that was the cause of this change being made. They acted as weak-minded men on that occasion, and because there was an experiment being tried in the neighbouring colonies they thought New Zealand must follow. Wise men would have awaited the results of the experiment in the other colonies, and then, if it had been successful, they would have tried it in New Zealand. But, Sir, we followed the lead of the other colonies long before their policy had proved successful. Why, there were experiments going on both in Victoria and New South Wales—in Victoria in a much greater degree than in New South Wales. I admit, from what is going on in Victoria at the present time—the ruin of the Chief Commissioner, Mr. Speight, and the spending of something like £20,000 in legal expenses in the fight between one section of the Press, representing the Commissioners, and another section of the Press who were fighting for the people of Victoria—from the whole course of this matter, and the terrible disclosures that have been made during the course of the trial, any one who has followed it, as I have closely, will see at once that we in New Zealand should feel that we have good reasons for congratulating ourselves that, though our condition was unsatisfactory, it was not so bad as that of our neighbours. I was accused by the honour-

Mr. Massey

able member—at least, my speech of Friday night was contrasted very unfavourably with the speech I delivered in respect to railway matters last session on introducing a similar Bill. I pointed out to the House, I think, then, and I say now, that personally I had no grievance against the Commissioners; I had, and have, the highest respect for Mr. Maxwell and for Mr. McKerrow and for Mr. Hannay; but before they were appointed I said that I objected to the system, and none that could have been appointed would have satisfied me, because the principle of taking the railways from the people was wrong. There has now been a change in the Railway Commissioners: two of them have gone, and I have no desire to attack them; and an attack upon their administration is unnecessary, seeing that the matter has been brought before the country,—the people,—and the people have decided that the railways must come back to them. And, that being the case, I say that it would have been out of place for me to have done otherwise than I did on Friday night. I will follow the leader of the Opposition in one or two of his contentions. First of all, he said that the receipts from the railway reserves were properly charged to the railways as railway revenue. But, Sir, he forgets this fact: that the land upon which the railways were built—and that is the land I referred to—was Crown land, and, consequently, it being Crown land, the receipts should not be charged at all as against the capital account of the railways, but the revenue derived from these reserves, I say, should be territorial revenue. Then, I was told that there was no danger of the Commissioners taking land, but I say that not long ago the Railway Commissioners proposed to take a large strip of land between Port Chalmers and Dunedin. The amount involved was about £25,000, and it rested solely with the Commissioners whether or not they took that land for railway purposes; but the local authorities petitioned the Government, and the Government did its best, and stepped in to prevent it. And what has occurred in other places? Take the Bluff, where a whole strip of country was taken; and so all over the country the same thing has been done. I say it was high time the colony awoke to the fact of what has been going on, and I am prepared to prove my facts. Then, the honourable member stated that the Boards of Railway Commissioners have managed the railways in Victoria, and that our Commissioners have the same powers as the Commissioners in that colony, and that the great trouble in Victoria arose prior to the change being made in the railway system. Our system is really a copy of the Victorian system, and the powers given to our Commissioners are the same powers that were given originally to those Commissioners; in fact, some of the amendments in this Bill are copied from the Victorian Act, and are the result of the experience of that colony. The honourable member also said that the Commissioner system in New South Wales was a success: if he had been here this afternoon and had heard what the honourable member

for Eden said he would have heard quite a different story, because he admitted in his speech that in both Victoria and New South Wales they had been a failure, and he did not concur with my honourable friend that in New South Wales the Commissioner system had been a success. It is true that they have an exceptionally good man as Chief Commissioner, but even with him I say that the system has been a pronounced failure—that is, if we are to attach any weight to what has appeared in the Press and what has been stated in Parliament. Then, the honourable gentleman said that our farmers were content with the present system; but I say that the farmers have not protested against the proposed change, and I can speak with some authority. I say that the farmers of New Zealand, year after year, from the time of the appointment of the Commissioners, have approached the Commissioners in order to get their manure and lime and what was necessary to assist the soil carried at a lower rate—year after year they have approached the Commissioners and this House; and what was the Commissioners' reply to the appeal that was made? It is a matter of history that a long time elapsed before these changes took place. And I say that had the railways been controlled by a Minister, and had these just demands been met more expeditiously, it would have been in the interests of the railways, and would have promoted trade. What is it that promotes traffic on our railways? I say that all these concessions ought to have been granted years ago, yet it was only to pressure year after year that the boon was granted. The farmers, I say, to-day are desirous that a change should take place, and the users of the railways are also desirous that there should be a change, and they, I consider, have a right to be taken into consideration more than outside people. We have been told in this House that the towns are unfairly benefited, and not so much the country districts; but I say that the towns have a right to be considered, as it is the crowds of the towns who make up the deficiency in the railway revenue. How is a large proportion of this deficiency made up? By the excursions of the town people going into the country; and I say there ought to be more of them. Even under the old tariff system we had no season tickets, excursion rates, or workmen's trains, and we were years behind the times; and I say that a change should be made. We are going to the bad; we are losing year after year, and our lines and carriages are costing the same expense to keep up; whilst by the concessions that could be made there would be such an increase of traffic as would astonish the Railway Commissioners. I am satisfied that with the change that might be made a large increase of traffic would be carried on without the slightest increase of expense: and wherever they have been made these experiments have been found to be productive of good. Now, the honourable member said there was a question of continuity, and that there were likely to be changes of Ministers,

and that a Minister coming in to succeed the Minister in office might not understand the railway system, and so would not be fit or competent to hold the position. Sir, the honourable member does not trust the people, and by saying that he only casts a slur upon New Zealand, and on the people of this country. The honourable member will admit at once that I am quite right if I apply the question to myself, and that if anything happened to me the Minister who succeeded me might not do as well as I should. But suppose the honourable member changes places with me, would he use the same argument?

Captain RUSSELL.—Hear, hear.

Mr. SEDDON.—I am glad the honourable gentleman admits his own incompetence. That, Sir, is a thing I never did, because I feel myself competent. Now we can understand why those honourable gentlemen on that side of the House are afraid to take the responsibility which the people demand of them. They feel their incompetence, just as they did in 1887, when they handed over the railways to irresponsible Commissioners. The honourable member quoted the receipts from our railways, and he stated that the year before last they were larger than they had ever been before. This last year there was, of course, a falling-off; while, if we are to believe what we have heard in the course of this debate in regard to the condition of our railway bridges, of our rolling-stock, and in regard to the amount we shall have to make good—and I may tell the honourable gentleman that the demands now for funds to open up lines are larger than have been for years, and I believe myself that Government will be compelled to find the means to do this. I believe myself the Commissioners could easily starve the railways if they wished to cut down the expenses for work in order to show a good return. That has been done with companies, and we know with what result. I do not wish to say that the Railway Commissioners wilfully, or with any object of getting good returns the year before last, kept down the expenses; but if we are to believe what we hear from honourable members,—and especially from the honourable member who states that he has seen a certain report,—what can we infer? When I asked for a report on the Hurunui-Bluff line I received it, and it was laid on the table; but that honourable gentleman has said that there is another report from a subordinate officer, who is the officer in charge, and I say that report has been kept back. It is a most serious matter, and one which demands immediate attention, and I must inquire further into it. Then, we are told that the Commissioners are not of any particular "colour," and I admit there is, perhaps, something in that. I do not myself say there was much particular "colour" as regards the late Commissioners, but there was always this, and it cannot be denied, that, unfortunately, the Commissioners drifted into a subject of contention between two parties in the House, and, whilst the Commissioners themselves might have had no "colour," yet

Mr. Seddon

those who were supporting them, as against those who wished to get the railways under political control as they originally were, placed the Commissioners in the position of being the subject of a party question. The result has been that, without a desire on the part of the Commissioners to favour any party, this has been made to some extent a party question. I am pleased to find in this debate, however, that the question is discussed outside of party altogether. That is very pleasing to me, and it is as it should be, because it is purely a question of administration. I was pleased to see the change which has come over my honourable friend the member for Wellington Suburbs, because when I compare what took place on the passing of the present Act and his speeches on this question with his action at the present time I find that he has taken a new departure. Then he persistently advocated the Commissioner system. Now he has changed; the lesson taught him at the last election has done good: and it appears to me that he is really about the only one on that side of the House who is progressive and keeping up with the views and wishes of the people. Now, it has been said by the honourable member for Wellington City (Sir R. Stout) that the railway unions would have more voice in the management than the Commissioners; and certain statements were made on the floor of this House which I regret have ever been made, as those statements when made first were withdrawn, and should never have been repeated, because they are incorrect. Sir, I have taken a course which, I think, will commend itself to members of this House, as the Railway Commissioners are not here to defend themselves. I was accused some time ago of taking advantage of my position in the House in connection with the Railway Commissioners. If that would apply to me two years ago it would apply with much greater force now to the honourable member for Wellington City (Sir R. Stout), who made charges, which were subsequently withdrawn, and were renewed again in the debate on this Bill. I say that the charges that have been made against the Railway Commissioners are so serious that, if true, the officers against whom they are levelled are no longer fit to act as Railway Commissioners, and the fact would constitute the strongest argument that could be urged against the Commissioner system. Sir, I sent the following memorandum to the Railway Commissioners:—

"Premier's Office, Wellington,
"11th September, 1894.

"Memorandum for the Chief Railway Commissioner.

"On Friday night, during the debate on the second reading of the Railways Bill, and on a previous occasion, the senior member for Wellington City (Sir Robert Stout) made a serious charge against the Railway Commissioners.

"It was to the effect that a list of the names of persons who were reduced in salary or retired from the service was placed before the Com-

missioners, and that certain persons named therein had been retired, or otherwise reduced in order to bring about their resignation. It was further stated that, had it not been for the action of the Chief Commissioner in vetoing certain proposals, a great wrong would have been done to a number of railway servants.

"I would like to have an answer from you as to the truth or otherwise of these allegations, so that I may be in a position to clear up the matter when replying on the motion for the second reading."

"R. J. SEDDON."

To that I received the following reply:—

"New Zealand Government Railways:

"Wellington, N.Z.,

"11th September, 1894.

"Memorandum for the Hon. the Premier.

"In reply to your memorandum of this day's date, inquiring as to the truth of certain allegations made by Sir Robert Stout as to a list of the names of persons in the railway service who were to be reduced being placed before the Railway Commissioners, I have to state that the Commissioners had no communication whatever with any body or person as to reduction in the railway service. The charges and reductions made are the outcome of the deliberations of the Commissioners with the heads of the various branches of the service.

"JAMES MCKERROW,

"Chief Commissioner."

I think that ought to finally negative the charge, so far as the Railway Commissioners are concerned. Then, as regards the change necessary in bringing our service into line with the railway services in other colonies, there is a great deal in that contention. The railway service is almost the same as other branches of the Government service, and ought to be worked under regulations; and the position of the railway servants, in my opinion, could be as easily defined as is the position of Civil servants in other departments of the Government. And if the House agrees to bring back the railways to the people, that is the first step to be taken. You must give that power, and with that power you will have no more trouble in governing your railways than you have in governing your Post Office. It is the Post Office Act, and the regulations thereunder, which cause everything in that department to run so smoothly; and you have no scandals whatever. It is never said that the Postmaster-General is corrupt; you have no charges made against those in charge of the Postal Department, because there is a scale, and each regulation is adhered to; and so long as the regulations are adhered to there will be good feeling in the service, and all will be contented. I said before that there were one or two speeches on this Bill which were an exception to the general run of the speeches; and I was somewhat pained to hear the remarks of the honourable member for Wairau, because they were quite uncalled-for. I know that the honourable gentleman holds that the Commissioner system should be maintained. I give him credit for holding to his opinion, as I hold to the

contrary opinion. We are both representatives of the people, and, as such, are both equally entitled to hold to our convictions, and to act in accordance with those convictions. But when the honourable member was speaking to his constituents he did not in that speech say a single word with regard to the railways. The only reference to the matter in his speech I find is this:—

"Asked, at the close of his address, whether he thought it honest to whip up members to vote for the Government on the Railways Bill, and then vote against it himself, he explained the position by stating that he asked the Premier to relieve him from the duty of Whip."

Now, I ask, when the permission was given as requested, was that the action of an autocrat? Was that the action of a dictator, when a Government, with the narrow majority we had last session, would give the honourable gentleman leave to record his vote against the measure—a Government measure—and relieve him of the responsibilities of Whip to the party? I say, after having done so much for the honourable gentleman, the unwarranted attack he has made, and that without the slightest provocation, is to me simply inexplicable. I think the honourable gentleman, upon reflection, will regret having made the remarks he made to-day on the floor of this House. Sir, what we are asked to do now is to give the people back their rights. It is a restoration-of-rights Bill. Have the members of this House no confidence in themselves? The people of the country have confidence in you, and I say there is no corruption in connection with the New Zealand Parliament. The principles of the members of the Legislature of this country have never been questioned, and I hope they never will be, because it would be a reflection on the people of the country. And to say that we are afraid to trust ourselves with the management of this three-quarters of a million, and to place the control of three or four thousand people in the country under the Government, for fear of corruption simply means that the honourable members who use such arguments are afraid of themselves, and they are not doing justice to themselves or to those whom they represent. I will say nothing more on the Bill before the House. There are three parties on this question. One party wishes to retain the railways in the hands of the Commissioners; there is another section of the House desirous that a Minister should sit with the Commissioners; and I believe there are a large majority of the House who are at once prepared to hand over the control of the railways to Parliament. As we submitted certain proposals to the House last session, and as those proposals were submitted to the people, and a decision was arrived at, Ministers considered that they were justified in bringing down this measure, so as to give members of the House an opportunity such as provided in Part III. of the Bill, so that next year, if they thought necessary, by resolution of the House they could take over the entire control. If there is a majority desirous that the control shall be

taken over at once, there is provision made, and I tell the House now that the Bill has been framed to give every freedom to members to express their opinions as to the direction in which this Bill should go. That being the case, I think I can leave the second reading of the Bill to honourable members, so that when in Committee the decisions arrived at will be such as will best promote the well-being of the country: and the well-being of the colony will be assured and conserved by the railways being controlled by the State, and by restoring to the people the rights taken away in 1887.

The House divided.

AYES, 45.

Button	Larnach	Pinkerton
Carncross	Lawry	Pirani
Carnell	Mackintosh	Reeves
Carroll	McGowan	Russell, G. W.
Crowther	McKenzie, J.	Seddon
Duncan	McKenzie, R.	Smith, E. M.
Earnshaw	McLachlan	Smith, G. J.
Flatman	McNab	Stevens
Graham	Meredith	Tanner
Guinness	Mills	Thompson
Hall	Montgomery	Ward
Hall-Jones	Morrison	Willis.
Harris	Newman	<i>Tellers.</i>
Hogg	O'Regan	Collins
Houston	Parata	Kelly, J. W.
Hutchison, W.		

NOES, 13.

Allen	Lang	Wilson.
Buchanan	Massey	
Fraser	McGuire	<i>Tellers.</i>
Green	Russell, W. R.	Bell
Hutchison, G.	Saunders	Buick.

PAIRS.

<i>For.</i>	<i>Against.</i>
Buddo	Mackenzie, T.
Cadman	Mitchelson
Joyce	Duthie
Kelly, W.	Te Ao.

Majority for, 32.

Bill read a second time.

RATING OF CROWN LANDS BILL.

Mr. WARD, in moving the second reading of this Bill, said there was very little in it which called for explanation on his part. He might say that the proposal was to rate Crown lands up to one-quarter of the rate imposed upon other lands. Honourable members would observe that there was a limitation by which no local body could receive more than £1,000. This was an important feature in connection with the Bill, and would prevent any local body in any part of the colony from receiving an undue proportion of rates. The other portion of the Bill indicated the way in which the rates were to be struck. It provided for the Surveyor-General being the sole judge of the value of Crown lands. That, he thought, was a necessity. The House would see that, unless that were done, local bodies might decide that, as the land was Government property, an undue amount should come towards their

Mr. Seddon

revenue. That being so, a check was essential, and this was provided by the Surveyor-General being the valuer, instead of the local body. In the skeleton roll sent in by the local body to the Commissioner of Taxes the values so fixed would be inserted, and a certificate issued by the Commissioner that the rates were payable. Beyond those features there was nothing in the Bill that called for special remark.

Mr. MITCHELSON asked the amount which was expected to be collected under the Bill.

Mr. WARD said about £10,000.

Mr. THOMPSON thought it was a pity the Colonial Treasurer did not tell the House the object of introducing such a Bill.

Mr. WARD.—To give the local bodies some revenue.

Mr. THOMPSON did not believe in playing with local bodies, or trying to humbug or fool them, which this Bill was evidently intended to do. He thought it would be far better to tell the local bodies that the Government could not give them assistance, rather than introduce such a Bill as this. If this Bill really gave them any assistance he would not have a word to say against it. What was the position? Two-thirds of the rates levied under this Bill would go to one particular district in the colony. There was no doubt about that. The Bill was intended for that.

An Hon. MEMBER.—Which district?

Mr. THOMPSON said the west coast of the Middle Island. That was where most of the money would go, and it was of no use trying to lead local bodies throughout the rest of the colony to think that they were going to get some assistance, because they were going to get no assistance at all from this Bill.* The Colonial Treasurer had stated that no local body was to receive more than £1,000 under this Bill.

Mr. WARD said the bulk of the money would not go to the West Coast.

Mr. THOMPSON said perhaps the honourable gentleman would state, when replying, how much would go to the West Coast.

Mr. WARD.—Yes.

Mr. THOMPSON said, so far as the poorer districts throughout the North Island were concerned, this Bill would be a mockery, a sham, and a delusion. There was no doubt whatever about that. Then, the local bodies were expected to prepare skeleton plans for every few patches of Crown lands scattered throughout their districts, and send such plans to the Surveyor-General. Why, the whole thing would not be worth it; it would not be worth the cost of preparing the plans. He would just as soon have seen the Bill go into the waste-paper basket for any benefit which would come to his constituency from it. He thought the position of his constituency under the Bill was a fair sample of how the thing would work throughout the Province of Auckland; and, of course, except on the west coast of the Middle Island and in the Province of Auckland, there were few places where there were any Crown lands. He would suggest that the honourable gentleman had better let the Bill drop. He had stated he intended to deal with the whole

question of local government next session, and the provisions were not to come into operation until after March, 1895. If they were going to have a new measure next session dealing with the whole question, what was the use of bringing in this Bill?—because whatever provision they made in it would be upset in dealing with the general question.

Mr. WARD said they would put an amount on the supplementary estimates this year, if necessary.

Mr. THOMPSON said that if the honourable gentleman would make out a schedule, and tell them how much was going to the different County Councils, then they might be able to consider the question. But the Colonial Treasurer was in the habit of keeping them in the dark, and of bringing down measures which they were asked to take for what they were worth, and would say nothing of what they would get out of them. However, he hoped in reply he would state how much the local bodies would really get under the proposed Bill; though, for his part, he would sooner see the Bill dropped altogether. His reason for protesting against it was that it would raise the hopes of members of local bodies, and that those hopes would never be realised. The Bill would be a disappointment. If the Government were not prepared to do anything this year it was far better, and would give more satisfaction to the local bodies, to allow the Bill to drop. He believed that other honourable members would indorse that opinion. For his part, he looked upon the Bill as useless.

Mr. BELL said, in support of what had fallen from the last speaker, he would like to direct the attention of the Colonial Treasurer to Return B.-14c for 1888.

Mr. WARD.—Why not take that for 1889-90?

Mr. BELL had not examined that, but would refer the honourable gentleman to the return he had seen. According to this return there was not a single county, with the exception of four, which had received £1,000. There was no county, with the exception of five, which had received £500. The County of Wairarapa had received £886, the other counties all less than £500, and only one more than £400. What were the other counties? The Buller had received £1,616; the Grey received £3,114; Inangahua, £4,118; and Westland, £14,217. The honourable member for Marsden was perfectly right.

Dr. NEWMAN said under the Crown Lands Rating Act of some years ago some £30,000 a year was paid, and the member who had last spoken was perfectly correct when he said nearly the whole of it went to the West Coast. It was said that society was largely divided into two classes—the fleecers and the fleeced—and under this Bill the West Coast would fleece the whole of the rest of the colony. It was surprising that his honourable friend, in introducing the Bill, had not told them something more about it, but he had the knack of slurring over difficulties. As a matter of fact, the West

Coast valued all the glaciers and mountain-tops at 10s. an acre, and the Hon. the Premier was most indignant when the old Act was repealed.

Mr. SEDDON said he had advised Sir Harry Atkinson to make amendments which would restrict and stop abuses.

Dr. NEWMAN said, as a matter of fact, the representatives from the West Coast very naturally voted against the repeal of the Act. He thought it would be very much more satisfactory, before they actually had the second reading, if the Colonial Treasurer would tell them where the £10,000 was to go. Was it to go as it had gone in the past, when the whole of the rest of the counties were taxed and the West Coast got nearly all the money? With regard to the Wairarapa, a great deal of Crown land had been sold there, and that district would clearly get very little under the Act.

Mr. SEDDON said he would, under ordinary circumstances, have left the Bill entirely in the hands of the Colonial Treasurer, because he would do it full justice in reply. But he would say that he never knew members to form more erroneous conclusions upon a measure than they had formed upon this. The honourable member for Marsden might shake his head, but he would tell him that the North of Auckland, where they had bought Native lands—and the moment Native lands were purchased they became Crown lands, upon which rates must be paid—was a district that would benefit by this Act, and that there was no district in the colony where roads were wanted more than there. The honourable gentleman had been very persistent in interviewing the Government and asking them to provide roads in his district, and now, when there was an opportunity for some little help, the honourable member objected. On a former occasion the honourable gentleman said that if it was going to make provision for his district he was going to support it, but he wanted to know what it was going to do for his district before he did anything; and that was the position the honourable gentleman took up now as far as this Bill was concerned. If the honourable gentleman had known what his district would receive under this Bill they would not have heard a single sentence from him. It was intended to help the sparsely-populated districts where there were large areas of Crown lands, and where there were roads to be maintained by a mere handful of ratepayers as against settled districts. Where the Crown lands lay the ratepayers year after year were called upon to maintain roads, and to make roads, and by the increase of population and by the expenditure of the ratepayers' money the Crown lands were improved in value. It was surely not unfair under these circumstances to ask the Crown itself to assist to the amount payable under this Bill in the maintenance of these roads. The amount payable under this Bill would be a diminishing quantity, for as fast as they settled the country the amount of Crown lands was reduced, and so was the sum payable under the Bill.

Sir Harry Atkinson had expressed very great regret at doing away with the previous Act, but was forced by circumstances to repeal it. That the measure had been abused he admitted. It had been abused by the West Coast counties, and that very abuse had caused its repeal; and he had warned them that it would be so, and had assisted Sir Harry Atkinson to improve his measure, so as to stop that abuse. There were two measures which should keep alive the memory of Sir Harry Atkinson in this country, and they were the Crown Lands Rating Act and the Roads and Bridges Construction Act. Those two measures would have done more, if worked satisfactorily, for the development of the settlement of the country than any other two measures ever passed in the colony. He had had some experience, and knew what he was talking about. As the measure would be now applied there were only one or two counties on the West Coast that would even come up to the maximum, because the amount payable was altered. The experience they had gained in working the other measure had been of benefit in the construction of the present one, and abuses had been guarded against. The goldfields and outlying districts of Otago would benefit under this Bill.

An Hon. MEMBER.—The amount would be very small.

Mr. SEDDON said, No; that was not so, for all Crown lands would be rated under the Bill. It had for a long time been contended that the Government was taking advantage all round of the money spent by the ratepayers, and was not giving anything at all in return. The subsidy system was bad, because the richer a district was the more it would get—the more rates the greater the subsidy; while it ought to be the reverse: the poorer the district, the more Crown lands there were in it, the greater was the necessity for settlement; and it was to meet cases of that kind that this measure had been introduced. Those who desired to see assistance given to the goldfield counties and the sparsely-populated districts, where there were large areas of Crown lands, should support the measure. The honourable member for Wellington City (Mr. Bell) sneered at a payment of £500 to a local body: but it might mean the salvation of a local body—it might mean a bridge across a creek, and a great help to settlement; even £250 would be a great boon to some small local bodies, or half that sum might be of material assistance. He should not have taken the unusual course of speaking on the Bill had it not been said that it was brought forward to meet the West Coast. It was not done to meet the West Coast. If they desired to promote settlement, there was no way in which they could distribute assistance better than upon this basis. It was the best they could devise; and that being the case he hoped it would not be said that, being a member for the West Coast, he took advantage of his position to promote legislation in favour of that district in the House. The honourable member for Wellington City had been too severe this time, and he hoped the honourable gentleman

Mr. Seddon

would follow his usual course and apologize for it.

Mr. FRASER would like to know if the Treasurer would give them a list of the counties that would be benefited. He thought it was only fair that the House should have that information before they discussed the measure. It was not fair to ask them to discuss it without that information.

Mr. WARD said he would give it when he replied.

Mr. FRASER thought they ought to have the information first.

Mr. G. W. RUSSELL said he happened to come from a part of the country where there were no Crown lands, and consequently he regarded this Bill as one calculated to subsidise certain portions of the colony without giving to the others any recompense. So far as Canterbury was concerned it possessed absolutely no Crown lands, and he failed to see how they could be expected to accept a Bill like this. On the other hand, across the ranges there were undoubtedly large areas of Crown lands held as coal-leases and in other ways, and, having looked through the Bill carefully, it appeared to him that the local bodies there were to receive the bulk of these rates. There were other parts of the colony where there were Crown lands unsold, and in these the local bodies would receive rates under the Bill, but would not be compelled to use them for the purpose of making roads. Now, if the Government brought down a comprehensive policy for the purpose of charging upon the Crown lands the cost of making roads, then he could understand the proposal. But this Bill did not do that. There would be no guarantee that even the rates they would obtain from Crown lands would be spent in opening them up; all the moneys that were received by the local bodies would be simply handed over to them, and would go into current revenue. In order to show that the purpose of the Bill was not to develop the blocks of Crown land he would quote from the Financial Statement, where this matter was shadowed forth. He would ask the attention of honourable members to this:—

“Many local bodies are, financially, in a very unsatisfactory state, and in order to assist them it has been decided to bring in a measure authorising them to levy rates upon Crown lands. From this source it is expected that they will receive about £10,000.”

11.30. The two measures passed by Sir Harry Atkinson, to which the Premier referred—particularly the Roads and Bridges Construction Act—were intended primarily for the purpose of opening up districts by new roads. He agreed with the honourable gentleman when he spoke so highly of the Roads and Bridges Construction Act, which was one of the most statesmanlike measures in connection with local government ever introduced into this Parliament. If the policy of that Act were carried out, and the people allowed to rate themselves for making their roads, receiving assistance from the State in order to do the

work, it would be a great deal better than what was proposed in this Bill. So far as he read the Bill, the cities would receive rates upon the public buildings, such as post-offices and large buildings of that kind; but what were the country districts going to receive? They were compelled to maintain their roads and bridges, and, if he gathered anything from what the Premier said, he contemplated depriving the local bodies of the subsidies now paid to them.

Mr. SEDDON.—Certainly not.

Mr. G. W. RUSSELL said perhaps he misunderstood the honourable gentleman, but what he gathered was that the subsidies were likely to fail, and this was intended as a means of replacing those subsidies, because he said that the subsidies were unfair in this respect: he thought they assisted the strong districts which already had roads, and therefore had a larger rateable value, and this was intended to assist the weaker districts.

Mr. SEDDON said that what he had said, so far as subsidies were concerned, was that they were unequal—the richer the district the more subsidy it got, and the poorer the district the less the number of roads, and therefore the subsidy was smaller while its requirements were greater.

Mr. G. W. RUSSELL said that was quite correct; but he might point out to the honourable gentleman that even in the richer districts, although they got a larger amount of subsidies, they had a larger amount of work to do in the way of maintenance. The traffic was so much heavier and their roads had to be kept in much better order than was the case in the more sparsely populated districts. Speaking as a country representative, he failed to see that his district would receive a single pound under the proposal. He saw the honourable member for Wellington City smile, but that gentleman lived in the City of Wellington, which was likely to have a large amount out of the subsidy. It had large public buildings.

Mr. BELL.—Only the Post-office.

Mr. G. W. RUSSELL said that was a very large building, and was not the only public building in Wellington. He would also point out that in this case the rating was not on the unimproved value. That was expressly exempted from the Bill; and he would like to ask the Government why, when they brought in a Bill providing for rating on the unimproved value to apply to everybody else, the same principle was not to apply to their own lands. They passed a Bill the other night, which was declared to be a good Bill, but in this Bill they had exempted themselves from the operation of that particular Bill, and he said that was inconsistent. He thought that any policy relating to subsidies ought to be one that would bear equally all over the colony, and only such a Bill would be satisfactory.

Mr. HOUSTON, as a representative of a northern constituency, characterized the Bill as a delusion and a snare. There were five local bodies in the district he represented, and he did not believe under the Bill they would

receive £100. Of all the districts in the colony he believed the northern districts required more assistance from the Government than any other, but under this Bill they would receive less than any other part of the colony. The provision that required a local body to furnish skeleton rolls to the Surveyor-General would cost local bodies more than would be repaid by any assistance they would get from the Government under the measure. As a representative of a northern district he would oppose the Bill, as it would be of very little assistance to the local bodies in his district.

Sir R. STOUT said, as he understood the Bill, it was meant to give assistance to the West Coast counties. He thought assistance ought to be given to them, but it should be given in a different way. In his opinion, the road from Springfield to Jackson's, which he understood was now being maintained by the Government, should still be so maintained, and the road from Reefton to Motupiko Valley ought also to be maintained by the Government. If that were done, the counties could get on with their other roads very well. Perhaps some aid should be given to the Buller County to maintain the road from Inangahua Junction towards Westport, but with that assistance the county could maintain the other roads itself. There was very good reason why assistance should be given to the maintenance of those roads. They ran through a poor country, and they were what might be termed tourist tracks, and he would grant that they required Government aid. But he objected altogether to the Bill, because it was founded altogether on a wrong principle. It was far better to pay in a direct way more money than could be obtained under the Bill than to give it under a principle that could not be defended. He could understand subsidies being given per head of the population, because that would give aid to people independently of their inability to pay rates; but to say that aid was to be given because the Crown had lands that could not be settled,—that nobody would buy,—was a wrong principle. A great deal of the land rated under the old Crown and Native Lands Rating Act was composed of glaciers, and could never be sold if you kept it for two or three hundred years. It could never be settled; and it was absurd to say that the Crown should pay rates on land that was unworkable and unsaleable.

Mr. SEDDON said that was exempted from the Bill.

Sir R. STOUT said there was no exemption. The matter was left to the Surveyor-General. He thought the proposal was entirely unfair. It had been tried. The Crown and Native Lands Rating Act had been repealed by an enormous majority in the House, and it was recognised throughout the colony that the system was unfair and unworkable, and so it would be now. All the Crown lands that could be leased, if open lands, were taken up at once: if bush-lands they were not useful unless they had roads made through them, and there was no provision that the money was to be used for opening them up: that would be different

altogether. He thought the proper thing to do for the West Coast counties would be to take charge of the main roads he had mentioned: that would be of some benefit to them, whereas this Bill would not be of so much use. Because, even if the State gave Buller £1,000, and Inangahua £1,000, and Westland £1,000, unless you maintained those main roads they would be in as great difficulties as ever. So far as Westland was concerned, that main road had been maintained by the Government, and he submitted the other roads he mentioned ought also to be maintained by the Government. If that were done it would be fair. This Bill would give no aid at all.

Mr. MCGOWAN wished to ask the Treasurer a question with reference to the goldfields in the North. They were Native lands, leased to the Crown for mining purposes. Not being Crown lands, what would their position be, and would they derive any benefit from the Bill?

Mr. CROWTHER did not know whether the Government intended it or not, but it seemed that the Bill had a very partial application. If the system recommended by the senior member for Wellington City were adopted it would have to apply to the roads in the North, and that would open a very wide question. The Bill did seem, on the face of it, to be what one might call very partial legislation. If such was the case, he thought the Government should approach it very carefully, because, although they did not know all the details in connection with it, the Government might rest assured that in the very near future they would educate themselves up to the facts, and when they found it to be a Bill having in view favouring one part of the colony at the expense of the others, when they came there again there would be a very strong effort to equalise matters. The matter was not understood, especially by new members, such as himself. At the same time he thought it was absolutely necessary for the Government to be very cautious in taking steps of this kind. If the new members were to be led by the statements made by one of the honourable members representing Wellington City, it would seem that the Bill was going to confer very large benefits on one district without conferring the slightest benefits at all on others. If they should learn that it was to be partial legislation, and, still further, if its partial effects were known by the Government, it would not be very much to their credit.

Mr. FRASER hoped that members representing the West Coast would not imagine that in any remarks he might have made on a previous occasion he in any way opposed assistance being given to their districts. He knew that to all goldfields it was absolutely necessary that some exceptional assistance should be given. The country was generally very rough, and it was impossible for the local bodies, out of ordinary revenue, to construct all the roads. What he did take exception to, and what he still took exception to, was that the Bill now before them was the

only measure the Government proposed to bring down to help local bodies out of their troubles. If this was the case, it was utterly inadequate to meet the difficulty. The Treasurer had admitted in his Financial Statement that a number of local bodies were in financial straits, and yet the only relief he proposed to give was this measure, which would not benefit them all, and even those which it benefited would not be benefited alike. That was his complaint against this Bill—that this was the only measure which the Government proposed to bring down to help the local bodies out of their financial straits, and, when he and other members asked the Colonial Treasurer just now to give information on this subject, it was all very well for him to say that he would give it by-and-by.

Mr. SEDDON.—He did not say “by-and-by.” He said “in reply.”

Mr. FRASER said the Colonial Treasurer should have given the information when introducing the Bill. The House was entitled to the information before honourable members were asked to discuss it, and to discuss it without knowing how it was going to affect the local bodies. The House ought not to be left in darkness concerning this matter. With regard to the remarks made by the senior member for Wellington City, that honourable gentleman was quite right in saying that direct assistance should be given to these West Coast counties, and that it would be very much better to do it in that way than under this Bill. It was quite true certain counties in the North might receive assistance under this Bill, as the Government intended to purchase Native lands there; but in the South some of the counties would receive nothing, and others a sum quite infinitesimal. He was rather surprised to find by the Bill that in the towns a number of very valuable public buildings were to be subject to rating—doubtless a sop to catch the vote of town members. As far as the country was concerned, were honourable gentlemen aware that section 4 guarded the Government from having to pay anything additional in consequence of the rating upon unimproved values? The Government were perfectly well aware of the fact that under that Bill the amount of rates required to be raised in the counties would impose additional burdens on unimproved lands. They guarded their own, but let others suffer. This action of the Government was quite inconsistent. He had drawn attention to this previously, but honourable gentlemen did not seem to think it was at all important. He admitted at once that the provisions of this Bill would prevent the abuses that occurred under the old Crown and Native Lands Rating Act. There were some improvements to which he would refer in Committee, and he would propose amendments in the Bill. It was not his desire to prevent special assistance being given to the West Coast, but he wished to emphasize the fact that this was the only Bill shadowed forth in the Financial Statement, or from the Treasury benches, in which the Government proposed to help local

Sir R. Stout

bodies. He had on a former occasion indicated the manner in which assistance could be given to local bodies to enable them to clear off their overdrafts, which were now 'judicious loans. He was told it might not be judicious to afford them too great facilities for borrowing under the Loans to Local Bodies Act. These local bodies were in a most serious position. The interest which they were paying—7, 8, and 9 per cent.—was a heavy drain upon their revenues, and he hoped the Treasurer would take the matter into his consideration, and afford some facility for extinguishing these debts, and relieve the local bodies to a far greater extent than this Bill would or could do.

Mr. R. McKENZIE said that, in rising to support this Bill, he would doubtless be blamed for supporting what honourable members were pleased to call "the West Coast charity"; but this Bill would not only benefit the West Coast counties, but would benefit other counties in the colony as well. He represented three counties—the Buller, Collingwood, and a portion of the Waimea County. These counties would derive considerable benefit from this Bill; but the same thing would apply all over the colony. It also applied to districts where there were Government buildings. Referring to the remarks of Mr. Crowther, that honourable gentleman said this measure was worth watching, and that the Government were worth watching in connection with it. No doubt they were worth watching in connection with all measures, but, as far as this Bill and the West Coast were concerned, he was sure they were not doing even bare justice to the West Coast under it. The West Coast and Nelson counties paid something like £25,000 a year to the railway interest of the colony, and from that £25,000 they did not receive what was worth a snap of his finger. The roads in that part of the colony were going to waste and ruin for want of a little money to maintain them. The road from Nelson to Westport was purely and simply a colonial road, and ought to be maintained as such. It was two hundred miles long, and all along that road there was not £200 collected in rates. The West Coast counties had maintained that road for many years at their own expense, and had received little or nothing from the revenue of the colony towards its maintenance. Then, in his district, between Westport and Collingwood there was a track about two hundred miles in length; and who was going to maintain it? It was a track which was used very often, and was of considerable advantage to prospectors and settlers. There were twelve thousand acres of Government land open for selection within the last fortnight along that track; but if there were no roads to that land it would not be taken up. The honourable member for Riccarton said he had no Crown lands in his district, and that consequently it could not derive any benefit from this Bill. That might be; but he would remind the honourable gentleman that his district received very considerable benefit from the £25,000 a year which the West Coast paid to

the railway maintenance and management of the colony. The honourable gentleman was quite willing to receive his share of that amount unblushingly. He also forgot that the West Coast had always been a great support to Canterbury, and an excellent market for Canterbury produce and beef. He said that the districts in Canterbury had heavy traffic on their roads, while they had no such traffic on the West Coast: the position was precisely the reverse. He would remind the honourable gentleman that the heavy traffic he referred to was carried by the railways in Canterbury, where they had nothing heavier than a horse and buggy on their roads, whilst on the Coast heavy traffic was done by horses and wagons.

Mr. TANNER said there were a hundred and twenty traction-engines running on those roads in Canterbury.

Mr. R. McKENZIE said the traction-engines no doubt paid something towards the roads, and were also excellent road-maintenance machines, which acted as rollers. If the Government insisted upon the people who were benefited by the railways maintaining them at their own cost, then the people on the West Coast would be willing to maintain their own roads. But, as long as they were placed in the position of having to contribute towards the maintenance of the railways, and to maintain the roads in their own localities as well, the people of the West Coast could not possibly do without assistance. They were supposed to get £1,000 for each West Coast county under this Bill: he did not think they would get that much, but, if they did get £1,000 for each county, it was nothing like what they should receive. It would be swallowed up by the district and county roads, which had been neglected for years past. He did not consider it would be any great advantage to the West Coast if this Bill were passed, because it would simply be a small drop in the large bucket of their requirements. Some honourable member made the remark that the Premier always looked after the West Coast. The honourable gentleman, undoubtedly, did that efficiently for many years, but since he had been Premier the honourable gentleman had looked after all other portions of the colony much better than the West Coast; consequently the West Coast did not derive any particular or undue advantage from his being Premier of the colony. In fact, he was too busy and too much overworked to think of the local requirements of the West Coast. In reference to this matter, the West Coast people expected honourable members to look at the Bill from a fair and impartial point of view, and not from the point of view that it was going to specially benefit any particular portion of the colony. It was going to benefit all sparsely-populated districts, and would assist and promote settlement throughout the colony.

Mr. MILLS was surprised to find country members objecting to this Bill. If it did not give much, still half a loaf was better than no

bread. The Bill had been required for many years in various parts of the country. There was a large block of land in his district locked up as reserves, and it was quite time they had a Bill of this sort. Therefore he hoped that all country members would vote for the Bill. There might be nothing going to the towns; but, after all, they must recollect that the towns had received these benefits in days gone by. It was the outlying districts that expected to get some benefit from the Bill, and therefore he hoped the second reading would be agreed to.

Mr. HOGG said he was inclined to view this Bill in anything but a favourable light; and he thought it was inconvenient to bring it forward at this period of the session, because it was a Bill that required a great deal more consideration than it was likely to receive, and it was one of those measures that in his opinion should have been brought prominently before the local bodies of New Zealand before any attempt was made to pass it into law. Some years ago they had the Crown and Native Lands Rating Act, which was repealed. He understood that this Bill was something similar to the measure which was repealed, and he thought the House was entitled to have some good data and practical information before it gave its assent to a measure of this character. He thought that, in the first place, the local bodies should have been placed in possession of copies of this Bill, and that they should have been consulted with regard to its provisions; and, seeing that

12.0. they were going to have an attempt made next session to reform our present system of local government, it would be preferable if this Bill were brought forward at a later period—say, a year hence—in connection with the revised system of local government that had been promised to the country. It was perfectly reasonable that the country districts should endeavour to get all they could in the meantime; but he did not know exactly at present how the Bill was likely to affect the district which he represented, and he presumed there were a good number of members of the House in precisely the same position. He knew very well that from year to year the Crown lands in the district he represented were rapidly being occupied, and that the quantity was consequently diminishing; and at the same time he was perfectly well aware that in some other parts of the colony the Crown lands were not likely to be occupied during the present generation. What did that mean? It simply meant that the consolidated revenue was to be made to contribute towards particular districts permanently: in other words, the districts in which there were little or no Crown lands were to be made to contribute to those districts where a large quantity of unoccupied country existed. Now, they knew, from the geographical features of New Zealand, there were some very large areas in the colony that were never likely to be occupied, and he would like to ask whether it was reasonable that the taxpayers in the various districts throughout New Zealand should con-

Mr. Mills

tribute to the local revenue of districts that were situated in the way he had described. He thought they had too little information before them to enable the Bill to be properly understood. It might be an advantage to some country districts; but he was satisfied of one thing: that where progress was going on, where settlement was going on, the advantage from year to year was bound to rapidly diminish; and, after all, in districts such as the Forty-mile Bush, for instance, the amount of relief available from a Bill of this character would be of a very temporary kind. He would like to know whether this Bill was likely to be equitable,—whether it was likely to do justice to the whole country. His own impression was that it had not received sufficient consideration. For his own part, he would like to study the Bill a little more, and to have more information in front of him before it passed into law.

Mr. MASSEY would like to say a word or two about this Bill before the question was put. He was not quite sure how it was going to affect the district he represented, because the Minister who introduced the Bill gave the House very little information in so doing. The honourable member for Wakatipu, speaking on the Bill, stated that one of the districts it would benefit was the counties in the northern part of this Island. He presumed the honourable member referred to the district north of Auckland. Now, he found that when a similar Act was in operation several years ago one of the local bodies in the district which he (Mr. Massey) represented benefited to the extent of £2 9s. 6d., and another local body to the extent of £1 9s. At that time the land was rated on a full rating-value. According to the present Bill they were limited to one-fourth only, so that these local bodies, instead of receiving £2 9s. 6d. and £1 9s. respectively, would only get 12s. 6d. in the one case and 7s. 6d. in the other case. One of the members from the North of Auckland, speaking on the Bill, had characterized it as a delusion and a snare, and he could not help agreeing with him. Certain of the counties on the West Coast would each receive £1,000 under it, and there would be nothing for the district north of Auckland. That was virtually the position. When the Premier a short time ago visited the district which he (Mr. Massey) represented he promised the people there that the Government would take over the main roads or provide funds for the local bodies to maintain them. He hoped this was not the way in which the Premier was going to keep his promise, but that when he did keep that promise they would find something much more substantial than was contained in the present Bill.

Mr. McNAB also intended to oppose the Bill, but he would not detain the House long in giving reasons for his opposition. He contended that from a return placed before the House they were able to see how that portion of the colony from which he came fared under the old Act. They would see that there were only two small applications for the grant,

and the total given to that part of the district amounted only to £6 15s. 9d.

Mr. SEDDON said they did not work the Act; they never made application.

Mr. McNAB said, in regard to that, that they had received this small amount out of a total of £36,156. If the amount of money at their disposal for this purpose was to be limited to £10,000, he supposed the amount which would come to the electorate in which he was more particularly interested would be correspondingly reduced. If that was carrying out the intention of the Government in regard to giving financial support, it certainly would do very little good, and it would be far better to leave things as they were. He knew that a great number of the local bodies, including the Southland County Council, with which he was more particularly acquainted, had overdrafts. This particular body had at present an overdraft of something like £10,500; and it was found that that County Council—and he supposed the County Councils all over the colony were in much the same position—had got to pay something like 8 per cent. on the money they had on overdraft. Now, these overdrafts all over the colony might be regarded as permanent loans; and the Government, instead of bringing down a measure such as this, which would give a disproportionate amount of money to one particular portion of the colony, would have done far better had they brought down some scheme by which the means at the disposal of the local bodies which had obtained overdrafts might be assisted by giving them security for obtaining some form of permanent loan. In this manner the local bodies would be able to secure the amount as a loan at something like 6 per cent. They would also be able to form a sinking fund of 1 per cent., and yet have the money at their disposal at 1 per cent. less than they were now paying interest on overdraft. That would be a very substantial assistance to these local bodies, and it would be applicable to every part of the colony. The advantage which would accrue to the colony from such a form of legislation would be that the credit of the colony would not be lessened in the very slightest. It would be a very substantial means of monetary support to all local bodies, and yet would entail absolutely no cost on the colony. Looking at it in connection with the whole of the colony, and in connection with that particular portion of the colony which he represented, this was simply raising £10,000 and distributing a very large proportion of it indeed among the local bodies on the West Coast. He did not say that the West Coast ought to get just the same amount of financial support as other parts of the colony: in fact, he would be prepared to concede to them a considerably larger proportion than to other parts of the colony. In the future development of the colony—at least, he believed so—the West Coast would be a very important factor indeed, and it was not having financial support at the present time to enable it to play its part properly in the development of the colony's resources. It might be quite right, as was

suggested by one honourable member, that the colony should be called upon to do something in the way of giving them substantial support for their roads, and in other ways to open up our great resources for the development of our tourist traffic. There were very many ways of doing that. This Bill, one honourable gentleman said, did that. But when there were many ways of doing that, and when they found one of those ways to be open, and everybody knew what it was, he would be prepared to support it. In other words, they wanted one that was open and straightforward, and not one which professed to give an equal advantage to all parts of the colony. He said they ought to support anything in that direction that was open and fair in its operation, and that would leave no doubt in the minds of honourable members as to what was intended to be accomplished. If such a measure as that were brought down he would be one of the first to support it; but he did not care to give his support in the direction indicated—to a measure which did not profess to accomplish that object, but accomplished it in another and more indirect manner.

Mr. LANG merely wished to ask the Minister in charge of the Bill why the Crown lands within the County of West Taupo were exempted.

Mr. WARD thought the honourable member for Marsden had suggested that he (Mr. Ward) was desirous of keeping him in the dark. Well, now, his difficulty was a very peculiar one. On this occasion it was impossible for him to throw any light that would be satisfactory to his honourable friend, because that honourable gentleman was anxious to obtain a very large sum of money, whereas his district possessed no Crown lands. Under this Bill the honourable gentleman's district would obtain a sum of about £80.

Mr. THOMPSON wished to point out that since the return was made out the Crown lands there had been disposed of.

Mr. WARD said, Yes, but the honourable gentleman had forgotten that Crown lands had also been purchased in various districts. The honourable member for Wakatipu, amongst others, had a very convenient way of charging the Colonial Treasurer with not affording information. He would suggest to the honourable member that perhaps he might have got the information just as readily for himself as he (Mr. Ward) could have got it. The honourable gentleman must be aware that when the Crown Lands Rating Act was repealed there was provided a gradual process for reducing rates, coming down to one-fourth, at which they stood last year. And the honourable member for Waitemata could also have got the information he wanted without being so anxious to charge him (Mr. Ward) with not furnishing information. It was not part of the Treasurer's duty to provide honourable members with matter for their speeches which could be as readily obtained from the records as from him. Those honourable gentlemen should know what had happened in the past. They should know that under the Act to which he referred there was

to be a gradual diminution of the rates until they came to one-fourth, and they could, with equal readiness to himself, have referred to the records for the year 1889-90, when the rates were paid on the basis of one-fourth, and have got the amount which each locality would be entitled to receive under this Bill, without his taking up the time of the House in supplying this information for them. If the honourable gentleman had done that, he would have found that the other districts he had mentioned were not left so badly off as he imagined. It really appeared to him that the honourable member for Waitemata had displayed a want of knowledge about his own district which was rather remarkable. He said that under the full rates one district in his electorate received £2 9s. 6d., and another £1 9s., and from that deduced the argument that they would receive under the reduced rates only one-fourth of those amounts. Now, if that honourable gentleman had referred to the public accounts for 1889-90, when the rate had to be paid on the basis of one-fourth, he would have found that the County of Waitemata received £10 10s. 2d.

Mr. MASSEY said that was not in his district.

Mr. WARD was under the impression that it was. Would the honourable gentleman tell him what counties he represented?

Mr. MASSEY.—Rodney and Otamatea.

Mr. WARD said that those counties had not received large sums; and he thought then it was a pity that the honourable gentleman did not represent Waitemata. With regard to the remarks of the honourable member for Mataura, he did not know where the honourable gentleman got his information from regarding the amount of £6 15s. 9d.; but, even if it were correct, he would suggest to the honourable member that he should take a broader view, as under the Bill the District of Southland would receive the sum of £455, and Mataura was part of Southland. It would no doubt be satisfactory to the honourable member for Wakatipu to know that his own portion of the district would receive a very fair contribution, and this would probably induce him to vote for the second reading of the Bill. The District of Lake would receive £216 5s. 10d.; Maniototo would receive £267 13s. 8d.; and Vincent £205 10s. 8d. The honourable member's district was going to receive between £600 and £700, and yet he regarded this as unsatisfactory. He complained that the finances of the local bodies in which his district was interested were very unsatisfactory, and he had asked for increased borrowing-powers; and yet they found him opposing the proposal to give these local bodies this extra revenue!

Mr. FRASER said he did not represent Maniototo, and represented only half of Vincent.

Mr. WARD said that half Vincent County would, then, receive about £105, which he thought was a very fair contribution. He would suggest to the honourable gentleman, if his district was so well off as not to require this

assistance, that the best way of getting over the difficulty would be to transfer the amount to the honourable member for Marsden, who would, no doubt, accept it very readily.

An Hon. MEMBER.—How many local bodies are going to receive a proportion of the rates?

Mr. WARD.—About three hundred. It was perfectly true that some of them would not receive large amounts. The distribution was based entirely upon the area and value of unoccupied Crown lands in the respective districts. Honourable members were talking about the Bill having been prepared for the benefit of the West Coast; but what was the fact? Under this Bill the total amount the West Coast would receive was about £3,000, and that was very materially less than the £10,000 some honourable members had suggested: and if honourable members would take the trouble of looking up the returns that were tabled formerly they would find that the amount of revenue to be derived from this Crown-land rating was based upon the amount of Crown lands in the districts.

An Hon. MEMBER.—What would the Bay of Islands receive?

Mr. WARD said, about £40. With regard to the case put by the honourable member for Riccarton, who said that his county would get nothing under the Bill, he might say that was so; but the honourable gentleman should be generous, and remember that there was a time when a large quantity of Crown lands was sold in his district for £2 an acre, and that the revenue obtained by the sale of those lands was paid to the local bodies, and it enabled them to do without raising local rates for many years. That being the case, he thought that district had received very fair consideration at the hands of the colony, and now that it was strong and prosperous the honourable gentleman ought to be prepared to assist other and weaker portions of the colony. Taking the question of the rating upon unimproved value, which the honourable member for Wakatipu referred to, what was the position? The honourable gentleman asked if section 4 would be made applicable, as at first proposed, to the Rating on Unimproved Value Bill.

Mr. FRASER.—In that you are quite right, and I agree with it.

Mr. WARD said if the honourable member agreed with that he ought to have supported the Rating on Unimproved Value Bill, because the Crown lands upon which these rates would be levied were unimproved, and the rates would be levied on the unimproved value.

An Hon. MEMBER.—What about the cities?

Mr. WARD felt that, in the case of the cities, upon the whole this Bill would not be desirable, as regarded introducing the unimproved rating system into it. The bulk of the land to be rated in the cities was improved, and consequently the rates would fall upon the unimproved values so far as the country was concerned. And why should they hold out extraordinary inducements to people to bring into force the "unimproved" rating system for the purpose of

Mr. Ward

obtaining a large sum from the Government? In the case of the cities, the public buildings and other buildings, which were in an exceptional position, were rated under that Bill; and, that being so, the local bodies would receive as large an amount of revenue upon those properties.

Mr. G. W. RUSSELL asked if, in districts where there were Road Boards and County Councils, the amount would be paid twice over to such bodies.

Mr. WARD.—Yes, certainly, if both levied rates. With regard to the question raised by the honourable member for the Thames, he might say that the matter of the rating of Native lands and goldfields was not in dispute. The honourable member for Auckland City (Mr. Crowther) said that the Bill was very partial in its operation; but he thought the honourable gentleman had not much reason to complain, because the City of Auckland would receive £160: and the City of Wellington would receive £173. He supposed from the remarks of some honourable members that they did not want any revenue at all for their districts, and he was very glad to hear it; it was very gratifying to know that they were in such an independent position; but he thought that as soon as the Bill was put into operation those honourable members would be the first to take their contributions, all the same. The honourable member for Marsden had stated that there had not been sufficient information about the Bill,—and that he (Mr. Ward) was surprised to hear. The Bill was referred to in the Governor's Speech and in the Financial Statement; and, besides being referred to in both these public documents, the Bill was circulated for days, and he thought the local bodies in the various parts of the colony would have been able to quite easily calculate how much they were going to get, for the reason that they had received revenue from the same source before. He did not think there were any other points raised that called for answer, but he might say that some honourable members were mistaken in saying that the Bill had been introduced for the purpose of benefiting the West Coast. He would like to point out that under the Bill the only West Coast district that would get about £1,000 was the County of Westland; the Buller County, £690; Grey, £467; and Inangahua, £932. That was the position, and he thought it a very different one from what had been indicated by the honourable member for Wellington City (Mr. Bell). By comparison with what had taken place formerly, he might say that the limit, in the first place, of the amount to be raised was only £10,000, as against £36,000. Honourable members seemed to have made up their minds that the Bill was intended for the express purpose of providing revenue for a particular district, but it seemed to him that they had misstated the object of the Bill. The object of the Bill was to enable local bodies to receive some assistance until the Government introduced a Local Government Bill. It would enable the local bodies to improve their finances

with benefit to themselves, and to arrange their payments accordingly; and it would not affect the Local Government Bill proposed to be considered during the recess. He thought that the chief arguments that had been advanced so far as the disposition of the money was concerned had been fully met by him.

Mr. LANG asked if the Counties of Kawhia and West Taupo were exempt from the operation of the Bill.

Mr. WARD said if they were Native districts the Bill did not apply.

The House divided on the question, "That the Bill be now read a second time."

AYES, 27.

Buick	Larnach	Pinkerton
Carnecross	Lawry	Pirani
Carnell	McGuire	Reeves
Carroll	McKenzie, J.	Smith, G. J.
Collins	Mills	Ward
Duncan	Montgomery	Willis.
Graham	Morrison	<i>Tellers.</i>
Kelly, J. W.	O'Regan	Harris
Kelly, W.	Parata	McKenzie, R.
Lang		

NOES, 23.

Allen	Hall-Jones	Meredith
Bell	Heke	Russell, G. W.
Buchanan	Hogg	Russell, W. R.
Crowther	Houston	Tanner
Earnshaw	Mackenzie, T.	Thompson.
Flatman	O'Gowan	<i>Tellers.</i>
Green	McLachlan	Fraser
Hall	McNab	Massey.

PAIRS.

<i>For.</i>	<i>Against.</i>
Buddo	Button
Cadman	Mitchelson
Guinness	Te Ao
Joyce	Duthie
Mackintosh	Wilson
Stevens.	Stout.

Majority for, 4.

Bill read a second time.

The House adjourned at twenty-five minutes to one o'clock a.m.

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

• *Wednesday, 12th September, 1894.*

Second Reading—Third Readings—Foundation of the Colony—Hamilton Domains Empowering Bill—Gisborne Harbour Bill.

The Hon. the SPEAKER took the chair at half-past two o'clock.

PRAYERS.

SECOND READING.

Lake Forsyth Drainage Bill.

THIRD READINGS.

Timaru Harbour District Rating Bill, Oaths Bill.

FOUNDATION OF THE COLONY

The Hon. Dr. POLLEN.—Sir, in order that the *Hansard* record of the proceedings in this matter may be complete, I move, *That the report of the Joint Committee be read.*

The CLERK read the report, as follows:—

“The Joint Committee appointed to consider and report upon the proper date of the anniversary celebration of the foundation of the colony have the honour to report that the Committee, having examined official documents printed in Imperial parliamentary papers of the year 1838 to 1840, find that—

“(1.) Captain William Hobson, bearing Her Majesty's commission as Lieutenant-Governor, arrived at the Bay of Islands on Wednesday, the 29th January, 1840; that on the following day, January 30th, at Kororareka, at a public meeting of residents duly summoned, His Excellency read Her Majesty's commission, issued under the Great Seal, extending the boundaries of the Colony of New South Wales so as to include the islands of New Zealand; and, having also read his commission as Lieutenant-Governor, made proclamation that he had on that day entered upon his duties, and called upon all Her Majesty's subjects to be aiding and assisting him in the execution thereof. The flag having then received a royal salute from H.M.S. ‘Herald,’ the official formality of the foundation of the Colony of New Zealand was completed.

“(2.) That the official celebration of this event took place at Auckland on the 29th January, 1842, when the following notification was made in the *New Zealand Gazette*, namely:—

“‘Notice.

“‘Saturday, the 29th instant, being the second anniversary of the establishment of the colony, His Excellency the Governor has been pleased to direct that day to be held a general holiday, on which occasion the public offices will be closed.

“‘By His Excellency's command.

“‘WILLOUGHBY SHORTLAND.

“‘Colonial Secretary's Office,

“‘Auckland, 27th January, 1842.’

“(3.) That, as the 30th January, 1840, being Thursday, and the year leap-year, the first anniversary would fall on Saturday and the second on Sunday. It may be assumed, although it is not so stated, that this was the cause of the change of date. In the newspaper—the *New Zealand Herald*, published at Auckland, bearing date the 29th January, 1842—an advertisement appears of a regatta to be held on that day for canoe and boat races under the patronage of His Excellency the Governor, in celebration of the anniversary of His Excellency's arrival in the colony, and which is correct in point of date.

“(4.) That no further official notification of an anniversary holiday is found in the *New Zealand Gazette* until the year 1847, when the following notification appeared, namely:—

“‘Colonial Secretary's Office,

“‘Auckland, 25th January, 1847.

“‘Friday, the 29th instant, being the seventh anniversary of the establishment of the colony, His Excellency the Lieutenant-Governor has been pleased to direct that day to be held a general holiday, on which occasion the public offices will be closed.

“‘By His Excellency's command.

“‘ANDREW SINCLAIR,

“‘Colonial Secretary.’

“The date of the first notification was thus copied apparently without proper consideration, and the error remains unrectified.

“That, in the opinion of this Committee, it is fitting that the anniversary of the foundation of this colony should be celebrated as a general public holiday, and your Committee recommends that, in giving the necessary official notification thereof, the date should be made the 30th January, instead of the 29th as at present, so that it may be in accord with the historical fact.

“W. B. D. MANTELL, Chairman.

“11th September, 1894.”

The Hon. Dr. POLLEN.—It is not necessary that I should add anything to the facts already set out in the report of the Committee, or that I should detain the Council by a repetition of what I have said on former occasions on this subject. I shall content myself, therefore, with moving the motion standing in my name.

Motion made, and question proposed, “*That the anniversary of the foundation of the colony should be celebrated as a general public holiday, and that, in giving the official notification thereof, the date should be the 30th January, instead of the 29th as at present, so that it may be in accord with the historical fact.*”—(Hon. Dr. POLLEN.)

The Hon. Sir P. A. BUCKLEY.—In order that my honourable friend may not blame me if further action should not be taken on this matter, I may say I assume that until a resolution of a similar character is carried in another place it will have no effect. Of course I shall be very happy to act so far as we can here, but I really do not know what the result of this resolution will be. I merely wish to say this to my honourable friend, who has taken such an interest in this question, in order that he may not afterwards suppose that I had neglected an important duty in not giving effect to his wish.

Motion agreed to.

HAMILTON DOMAINS EMPOWERING BILL.

On the question, *That this Bill be read the third time,*

The Hon. Mr. SHRIMSKI said he regretted to have to move an amendment. He would ask the Council to agree that this Bill be referred back to Local Bills Committee A. When the Bill was passing through Committee on the previous day the Hon. Mr. Jennings and himself and several other members wished to have the report of the Committee read with refer-

ence to the Bill. The Attorney-General, he believed, said that the report had been read. However, the report was not read on that occasion, and the Bill was allowed to pass through Committee without an amendment. He was afraid they were going rather fast in these matters, when they allowed Bills to pass without paying them that due respect and attention which the members of the Council in the past had given. To prove the result of that, he would call attention to the report of the Committee, and he would ask the Chairman of the Committee whether the Bill had been carried out as proposed by the Committee. Before he went any further he might explain that this was the second report of the Committee on the Bill. It was originally reported upon, and the Council referred the matter back to the Committee. He would now move, *That the report and the Bill be again referred back to Local Bills Committee A.* The Committee in its second report stated that they had taken further evidence on the Bill, and had made amendments therein, and they recommended that the Bill be allowed to proceed with the amendments therein shown. The amendments consisted of the striking-out of Schedule I. The honourable gentleman in charge of the Bill never informed the Council that the schedule had been erased by the Committee. All that the honourable gentleman did was to ask the Committee of the whole Council to strike out paragraph 2, leaving the other five paragraphs in the Bill, without saying a word as to the report of the Committee. He would leave the Hon. the Speaker to judge whether he was not justified in moving that the report be referred back to the Committee for reconsideration.

The Hon. W. DOWNIE STEWART said it was a strange thing that some member of the Committee did not direct the attention of the Council to the facts, or that some remark was not made indicating the reason for striking the schedule out.

The Hon. Mr. McLEAN hoped that many such cases as this one stated would not occur in the Council. He took it for granted that any honourable gentleman who was in charge of a Bill should state deliberately to the Council what the Committee did with regard to that Bill, and, if he did not wish that the amendments be accepted, he should state so when the Bill was going through the Committee of the whole Council. He was sorry he was not present, as he watched all such Bills narrowly. This was one of a class of Bills which he thought the Council should set their face against passing. It interfered with the whole of the reserves of the town; and if you started with one town, whether it was a country town or not, the practice would extend, and you might just as well propose to take the Town Belt of Dunedin as take this portion of a reserve. If you proposed to take a portion of the Town Belt of Dunedin you would hear presently what the state of feeling was in Dunedin. He did not like these Bills at all, and he thought this Bill should be thrown out, and that time

should be given for further consideration. The Council had already sent the report back to the Committee once, and the Committee had struck out three-fourths of the Bill. That fact should have been stated in the Council. He thought that if they sent the Bill back again the Committee would probably take out the other fourth, and then they would have no more of the Bill.

The Hon. Mr. MONTGOMERY asked why some member of the Committee did not move the amendments in Committee of the whole.

The Hon. Mr. McLEAN did not know, but he held that any one in charge of a Bill should state what was done by the Local Bills Committee. If the Chairman of a Committee was absent, the member in charge should state deliberately to the Council what was done by the Committee, and then say whether he approved or opposed the Committee's recommendation. He would either vote for sending the report back to the Committee or that the Bill be thrown out altogether.

The Hon. Mr. BARNICOAT said, with reference to the motion to refer the Bill back to the Committee for further consideration, that had been done once, and the Committee reconsidered the Bill and forwarded it to the Council in another form. The amendments were read to the Council audibly. Whose duty it was to bring forward these amendments when the Bill was being considered in Committee of the Whole he did not know, but no one did so on that occasion. Certainly it was not the duty of those members who disapproved of the report—of whom he was one—to call the attention of the Council to the tenor of the report. He thought it was the duty of those members of the Committee whose opinions coincided with the amended report—it was for them to move in Committee of the Whole that the amendments recommended by the Committee be agreed to; but they failed to do so on that occasion. If the report was sent back to the Committee he presumed the Committee would meet and reconsider the question, and the result would probably be a repetition of the report which had already been presented to the Council. He might explain that the Hamilton Domain consisted of 350 acres described in the first part of the schedule and 160 acres described in the second part. The object of the Bill was to turn to some present account a small portion of that vast domain—not to alienate any part of it permanently, but only temporarily, for the purpose of creating a present endowment; and the object seemed to him to be a very legitimate one.

The Hon. Mr. RICHARDSON said he was one of those who moved that this Bill be referred back to the Committee; and when the Bill was before the Committee of the whole Council on the previous day he asked that the report be read, but he was given to understand that the amendments being moved by the gentleman in charge of the Bill were in accordance with the report of the Committee; consequently he took no further action in the matter. He was under the impression—and he thought other honourable members were also fully im-

pressed with that idea—that the amendments being moved by the honourable gentleman in charge of the Bill were those recommended by the Committee. He was told that the report was read; if so, he must have been out of the Council at the time.

The Hon. Mr. ACLAND, as Chairman of the Committee, wished to say that the amendments proposed on the previous day were in accordance with the recommendation of the Committee. It was quite true that all the figures were not in the report, because they had to be made up afterwards.

The Hon. Mr. BOLT might just say, as a member of the Committee,—and as it was on his resolution that the amendment was made in the Bill,—that the Bill as brought before the Council yesterday did not fully carry out the intentions of the Committee; but the Hon. Mr. McCullough, who had charge of the Bill, brought it under his notice, and he was perfectly satisfied that the intentions of the Committee had been fairly met, although, perhaps, not fully met. He therefore allowed the thing to go. He imagined—probably he was wrong—that the Chairman of the Committee would see that the amendments proposed by the Committee were properly carried out. That, of course, had not been done—at any rate, to the full extent that the Committee desired.

The Hon. Mr. MACGREGOR thought it was scarcely fair that any suggestion should be made as to the manner in which the honourable gentleman in charge of the Bill had dealt with the matter. The second report of the Committee was read to the Council, and he failed to see how anything could be said now as to its not having been read a second time. He was present on the previous day when the Hon. Mr. McCullough stated that he had received a telegram from the Mayor of Hamilton which stated clearly and explicitly what it was he was willing should be struck out of the schedule, and, as far as he remembered, no dissenting voice was raised, and it was never suggested that anything more should be struck out. No member of the Committee seemed to have thought there was anything in contravention of the wishes of the Committee. He thought it was very much to be regretted that any remark of the kind should have been made. As to the Bill itself, some members of the Council seemed to have what he might almost describe as a superstition as to the inviolability of reserves. Here was a very large reserve which was overrun with gorse, and which was worse than useless in the locality. It was proposed to make a portion of it available for temporary purposes—for, after all, it was not to be parted with, but only leased for a limited term of years.

An Hon. MEMBER.—Twenty-eight years.

The Hon. Mr. MACGREGOR said even that term was nothing in the history of a reserve. The reserve was over three hundred acres in extent; and it was, he thought, very unlikely that this huge domain would be wanted to its full extent—at any rate, for a very long period.

The Hon. Mr. OLIVER said it was stated

Hon. Mr. Richardson

explicitly yesterday by the honourable gentleman in charge of the Bill that his suggestions were not quite in accordance with the recommendation of the Committee; and he read a message which he had received from the Surveyor-General, who reported entirely in favour of the course he was then taking. He (Mr. Oliver) thought that the whole difficulty had arisen through neglect of the ordinary practice of the Council, which was, in regard to schedules to Bills, that in the case of any schedule containing land-measurements an officer of the Survey Department should be summoned to appear before the Select Committee, and that the descriptions should have the assent of the department, and that there should be direct evidence of their correctness. If the Hon. Mr. McCullough had taken that course he thought it would have greatly facilitated the passage of this small Bill through the Council.

The Hon. Mr. McCULLOUGH regretted exceedingly that there should be any wrong impression on the mind of even one individual member of the Council touching the manner in which this Bill was treated in Committee, and the way in which the business was conducted by himself. Had the honourable gentleman who had spoken in that direction been present yesterday—

The Hon. Mr. SHRIMSKI said he was.

The Hon. Mr. McCULLOUGH.—Not during the whole discussion. I mean the Hon. Mr. McLean.

The Hon. Mr. SHRIMSKI.—During the whole discussion.

The Hon. Mr. McCULLOUGH.—he would have heard that he (Mr. McCullough) had stated distinctly to the Committee that, having found out the views of the Local Bills Committee, he telegraphed to the Mayor of Hamilton, and that the Mayor of Hamilton replied, if the Committee thought fit, some portions of the land in the First Schedule might be taken out—that there was no desire on the part of the community to lease the whole of the domain land. He read that telegram to the Council. There was the Surveyor-General's letter, which he also read to the Council, in which that officer gave his opinion, and in which he said there was nothing wrong, so far as he was aware, in dealing with the allotments or portions of land referred to in the schedule. He exceedingly regretted there should be any misapprehension. He could assure the Council there was no intention on his part to mislead the Council in the matter. He thought he had been explicit. He had spoken as clearly as he could, and in a tone of voice so that all members might hear what he had to say. He would like to refer the Council to the correspondence. It was unnecessary for him to read the whole of the letter of the Surveyor-General. One portion was as follows:—

"So far as I am aware, there is no objection to their being dealt with in the manner contemplated by the Bill; and, with respect to the smaller allotments, particulars of which are given in the schedule, I equally know of no-

objection to dealing with them in the same manner."

That was quite explicit. There was no qualification about the subject at all.

An Hon. MEMBER.—Read the first part of the letter.

The Hon. Mr. McCULLOUGH said the first part of the letter referred to the paragraph which was struck out. It was as follows:—

"Referring to our conversation this morning on the subject of the Hamilton Domains Empowering Bill, I regret to see that an area of twenty-eight acres has been included in the schedule to the Bill by some mistake. This twenty-eight acres is already planted as a park, and is a very beautiful place, and is much used by the people of Hamilton."

The Hon. Sir George Whitmore had asked him why that paragraph was taken out. He stated it was a recreation-ground, and had got into the schedule by error: that was quite plain. There was no other objection raised. He might remind the Council that when he moved the second reading of the Bill he said that there was some difference of opinion. It might be that some members of the Council would have amendments to suggest, but when the Bill was in Committee he would be prepared to give consideration to the amendments proposed, and would probably accept some of them. He mentioned these facts to show that so far as his actions and his language were concerned he wanted to place the position of the Bill clearly before the Council. The Mayor of Hamilton, in reply to another query raised by some honourable members, said,—

"Land is to be leased only for twenty-eight years, all told. After that, improvements revert to the Crown. The Crown Law Officers approved of the lease. Plenty of land left for recreation purposes. Do not allow rest of the belt to be struck out."

He might also mention that he had received another telegram from a gentleman who had been Mayor of the Borough of Hamilton, and who was now a member of the Council, and had been so for years. This gentleman had sent him this telegram: "Hamilton Borough.—There is no desire to filch the endowment. Public opinion is with the Board." He hoped, after the explanation he had given, and the explanation he had made to members of the Committee to which the Bill had been referred, the Council would now allow the Bill to be read a third time.

The Hon. Mr. JENNINGS did not think that any member of the Council would regret the discussion that had taken place. It was not, he thought, that he or the other members of the Council found fault with the Hon. Mr. McCullough, but he thought the fault lay with the Local Bills Committee in not being explicit enough in their recommendation. The objection which he had to that Committee's report was the fact that it was not stated by the Chairman that Schedule No. 1 had been excised from the Bill altogether. He thought had that been stated at the time it would have

drawn more attention to the matter, and would have removed a good deal of doubt. When various members of the Council last evening looked at the report they found that there was a recommendation from the Local Bills Committee that Schedule No. 1 should be cut out altogether. As the member of the Council who had moved that this Bill should be sent back to the Committee, he did not regret his action in the matter at all, for most members would see now that by the amended Bill the second paragraph in the First Schedule, and which referred to a recreation reserve, had been struck out from the schedule. According to the Bill as it originally stood the Borough Council could, if they so wished, absolutely have sold this recreation reserve under the same conditions as other reserves in the district. He was pleased to see that that had been struck out, and also that other alterations had been made. The whole question relating to the Hamilton reserves had caused a good deal of talk some years ago; and he thought that this lease, which was made to the person mentioned in the Bill, Mr. Jabez Thornton Horne, was irregular in the first instance, and the Crown Law Officers in the year 1886 advised the Government not to sanction any further leases in the same direction. He had seen the Surveyor-General that day, and also saw a map of the Hamilton district, and he did not think that any great hardship would be done if the Bill were now allowed to pass, or that the reserves would now be taken unjustly from the people there. There were a recreation-ground and two other reserves in Hamilton, and he thought that proved there was sufficient care taken that there should be a sufficient number of what he might term "breathing-places" left to the people in the borough. He thought, as a member of the Council, it was his duty to always jealously guard domain and recreation reserves. He believed every other member of the Council would share that view. He now trusted that the Bill would be agreed to, as the objections to it had been removed.

The Hon. Mr. SHRIMSKI wished to withdraw his amendment. He had had no intention of reflecting on any one, but, as the report now clearly showed that the first part of the schedule had been struck out, while no mention was made of it at the time, he had thought it necessary to have some further inquiry.

Amendment withdrawn, and Bill read the third time.

GISBORNE HARBOUR BILL.

The Hon. Sir G. S. WHITMORE, in moving, *That this Bill be now read the second time*, said it had been brought forward by the Gisborne Harbour Board to repair what appeared to be a very great injustice. The history of this harbour was well known to honourable members. It was also well known that after the works had been proceeded with to a considerable extent it was thought advisable to stop them, and, in order to promote the security of the remainder of the loan, the balance was placed in the hands of the Public Trustee. Since

then the Public Trust Office had been very much enlarged, and the functions of the Public Trustee considerably varied from what they were at that time; and one circumstance had arisen which was very injurious to the Harbour Board of Gisborne. That Board had all throughout protested that they ought to have had a voice in the investment of the money. It appeared that the Public Trustee could invest all the moneys, and treat them with other moneys as a general fund. The money, being invested in Government securities, brought in only $4\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. to the Harbour Board. Now, as they had to pay 5 per cent. to the English bondholder, and 1 per cent. for a sinking fund, they were the losers by $1\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. on their money. This placed them in a difficulty, considering the large amount of money required, and they had to apply to the Government for some relief—at least in the direction of being allowed to have a voice in the investment of their own moneys, removing that responsibility from the Public Trustee, so that the moneys should not be entangled in the general funds. The Board had never been informed how their money was invested. Then, there were a large number of Treasury bills, which tended to bring down the amount of interest available; but, as a matter of fact, it was not the investment of the money that brought down the rate so much as the fact that the money was in a general fund. The Public Trustee himself had made no particular objection to this proposal, and the Government had informed him that if the Council thought fit to pass the Bill they were quite prepared to give effect to it. As the Bill provided a reasonable time within which to change the investments, there would be no real difficulty in getting out of the Treasury bills and arranging the securities. There was a provision under which the Harbour Board might recommend to the Colonial Treasurer, who had the administration of this fund, suitable securities. All that was necessary for the Government to do was to give up their Treasury-bills investments in that part of the country. It did seem only fair that the Gisborne Harbour Board should be afforded some relief, and that they should not be compelled to lose $1\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. every year. That being so, he hoped the Council would see fit to pass the Bill.

The Hon. W. DOWNIE STEWART said this was a very important Bill, as it interfered with the moneys which had been raised for the purpose of constructing this harbour. He did not quite understand the purport of the Bill, but he gathered that the Harbour Board found itself unable to profitably expend any further money.

The Hon. Sir G. S. WHITMORE said they did not say that, and he believed that they would like to have more. The Board had been told that they must absolutely stop further expenditure.

The Hon. W. DOWNIE STEWART said £100,000 had been expended in connection with the construction of the Gisborne Harbour, and he understood the expenditure of another

£100,000 would bring the harbour back to the state it was in before the expenditure of the first amount. It seemed to him that the best course the Harbour Board could adopt would be to pay off the present debt as far as practicable, and wind up the whole thing. It would be a much more reasonable proposition for the Board to buy up the debentures and reduce the liability by several thousands than to go on perpetuating an investment which in the end came to nothing. He would like to see the Bill referred to the Select Committee which was considering the Harbours Bill. The matter could then be gone into carefully. When a member of the other House he had had something to do with the passing of the Acts referred to in the present Bill, and he understood that the proposal he had then made in the Local Bills Committee had saved the Harbour Board from expending the money they now had in hand. He was not aware of that fact personally, but understood that was the case. It was an important matter, and he hoped the Council would ascertain carefully the bearing of the Bill before passing it.

The Hon. Sir G. S. WHITMORE did not think the Gisborne people would make any objection to the question being as fully inquired into as the honourable gentleman wished. The Bill had been carefully looked into already by the Local Bills Committee of both Houses, and that should be enough. If, however, any honourable gentleman desired further information he would not stand in the way of the Bill being referred to the Harbour Bills Committee already referred to.

Bill read the second time.

The Council adjourned at twenty-five minutes to four o'clock p.m.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.

Wednesday, 12th September, 1894.

First Readings—Second Readings—Third Reading
—Temporary Clerks and Experts—Eketaihuna
Post-and-Telegraph Office—Oruamare Block—
E. Taylor and Another—Brookside Post-office
—East Tamaki Post-office—Piripi te Maari—
Whangapoua Ferry—Mangamarama Creek—
Herbertville-Wimbleton Mail—Railway Union
—Government Railways Bill—School-attendance
Bill.

Mr. SPEAKER took the chair at half-past two o'clock.

PRAYERS.

FIRST READINGS.

Harbour and Education Reserves Bill, Land Drainage Bill, Mining Districts Land Occupation Bill, Midland Railway Contract Bill.

SECOND READINGS.

New Zealand Company's Land-claimants Bill, Westland and Nelson Coalfields Administration Bill, Criminal Code Bill.

THIRD READING.

Ngaere and other Blocks Native Claims Adjustment Bill.

Hon. Sir G. S. Whitmore

TEMPORARY CLERKS AND EXPERTS.

On the motion of Sir R. STOUT, it was ordered, That a return be laid before this House showing—(1) The number of extra or temporary clerks employed in each department of the Government during the financial years 1887-88, 1890-91, 1893-94; (2) the number of such clerks now employed who have been more than two years in the service; (3) the number of experts appointed during the year ended 31st March, 1894, specifying the departments in which appointed; and (4) the number of cadets appointed during the years before specified, stating the departments in which appointed.

EKETAHUNA POST-AND-TELEGRAPH OFFICE.

Mr. HOGG asked the Postmaster-General, If he will make inquiries respecting the working of the post-and-telegraph service in conjunction with the railway service at Eketahuna, and, if he finds that the increasing traffic and the convenience of the settlers demand such a change, take the necessary steps for establishing a properly equipped post-and-telegraph office in that important township? He would point out to the Minister that Eketahuna was a very important centre. With all due respect to the honourable member for New Plymouth, who alleged that Taranaki was the Garden of the colony, he would point out that Eketahuna was really the key to the great agricultural dépôt of this part of the North Island. Owing to the progress of settlement, there was now located there a very large population. From the time the train arrived at one o'clock to its departure only an hour was left, and nearly the whole of that time was taken up by the gentleman who had to perform the duties of Postmaster, ticket-clerk, telegraphist, and banker in his duties of Stationmaster. The result was that only five minutes were left for correspondence—to receive letters and answer them. Of course, it was simply impossible that this could be done in that time, and the result was that a whole day was lost. If a post-and-telegraph office were erected in a more central position it would be a great convenience not only to business people, but to the settlers, and there were a large number of special settlements in the neighbourhood of Eketahuna. During the hour he had referred to the post-office was locked up, and there was no means of obtaining postal notes, stamps, or conducting any kind of postal business. He thought it was carrying economy to a rash if not to a very unwise extreme when, under these circumstances, an officer in the service of the Railway Department was asked to perform duties in connection with the Postal Department as well. He trusted that the Postmaster-General would recognise the great necessity there was for establishing a separate post-and-telegraph office at Eketahuna. He believed there was no town of similar importance in New Zealand without a separate post-and-telegraph service.

Mr. WARD said that as the result of inquiry he found the volume of post and telegraph

business at Eketahuna would not warrant the appointment of an independent officer. If a change was made the post-office would have to be placed in charge of a storekeeper. He was of opinion that it was better to have the office in charge of a Stationmaster than in charge of a storekeeper. For the purpose of economy it was necessary, in these small places, that the Stationmaster should be also the Postmaster.

Mr. HOGG would like briefly to say that it seemed extraordinary he should receive such an answer, considering that Eketahuna possessed four large hotels, a Courthouse, a church, and a very large population.

ORUATAMORE BLOCK.

Mr. PERE asked the Government, Whether it is true that the Oruatamore Block, in the Wairarapa, was purchased from the owners by a previous Government on the understanding that the proceeds should be reinvested in other land for the benefit of the vendors, and if this bargain has been carried out? This referred to a block of land at Taueru, near the Taueru River, about eight miles from Masterton. There was some valuable timber on the land, and the soil was also very good. He was informed that during the time that Mr. George Beetham represented the Masterton District steps were taken by him to acquire the land for himself and Mr. Williams. The proceeds from the sale of the land were paid over to the Public Trustees, and they were told that, in return, land would be purchased for their benefit. The Maoris now said that they had been duped and deceived, and that they had not received any benefit out of the sale of their lands from that time to the present.

Mr. J. McKENZIE, in replying to the honourable gentleman, might say that it was an entire mistake, in connection with the matter, to imagine that the Government had purchased the land. The Government had not purchased the Oruatamore Block, nor had negotiations for its purchase ever been contemplated by the Government. The block had been leased by the Native owners to a Mr. James Cooper, in 1888, for twenty-one years at £25 per annum. This lease was assigned, a few days afterwards, to Messrs. T. C. Williams, W. H. Beetham, and H. H. Beetham, who paid the rent through the Registrar of the Native Land Court and the Treasury. That was the exact position of the matter. The land really had been leased to these private people, and £100 was now lying in the Treasury awaiting disbursement.

E. TAYLOR AND ANOTHER.

Mr. G. J. SMITH asked the Government, Will they agree to give the House an opportunity to consider the petition of Edward Taylor and another, presented to this honourable House on the 12th July, 1894, praying for relief in connection with the action of section 21 of "The Alcoholic Liquors Sale Control Act, 1893," together with the report of the M to Z Committee thereon?

Mr. SEDDON said at the present stage of business it would be almost impossible for him to give the honourable gentleman an answer in the affirmative as to settling aside a special time for the consideration of this question. The course usually followed was this: that petitions that had been referred to Committees, and had been reported on by Committees, were then referred to the Government. He believed that in this case the Committee had reported that they had no recommendation to make. If the Government could consider the matter they would do so. If, through inadvertence, any wrong had been done, it was a case for the Government to consider and rectify. That was the view he held; the Government would consider the matter, and let the honourable gentleman know, prior to the supplementary estimates being brought down, what was decided on. The Government would consider the question in a fair and impartial spirit.

BROOKSIDE POST-OFFICE.

Major HARRIS asked the Government, if they have decided yet on establishing a post-office at Brookside? If so, when will it be opened?

Mr. WARD said there were three offices within easy distance of Brookside, the nearest being four miles. The cost would be £10, which would absorb the whole revenue. It had not been decided, therefore, to open a post-office at Brookside.

EAST TAMAKI POST-OFFICE.

Major HARRIS asked the Government, if they have decided yet on establishing a post-office at East Tamaki? If so, when will it be opened.

Mr. WARD said it had been agreed to give £15 a year for this service, but it was found that the service and office could not be established for less than £25. A service could be secured for £15 a year, but the person who at one time agreed to act as Postmaster gratuitously now wanted a salary of £10. He was afraid the Government could not recommend the service.

PIRIPI TE MAARI.

Sir R. STOUT asked the Native Minister, Whether the recommendation of the Native Affairs Committee of 1893 on the petition of Piripi te Maari and twenty-four others (Petition No. 444)—that the Government "should at once try to arrange the matter, either by purchasing the rights of the Natives or by compensating them for any injury done"—has been given effect to? This had been a much-disputed question among the Natives, and referred to the outlet to the Wairarapa Lake. The Native Affairs Committee had come to the conclusion that the Government should try to arrange the matter, either by purchasing the rights of the Natives, or by giving them some compensation for the injury to their fisheries. He would like to know if any steps had been taken in the matter.

Mr. SEDDON said no active steps had been

taken in this matter pending the appeal to the Privy Council by the Natives.

Sir R. STOUT said there were two petitions before the Native Affairs Committee last year, and the one he referred to was in connection with Natives who were not interested in the lawsuit.

Mr. SEDDON said in that case there had been a misapprehension, and further inquiries would be made.

WHANGAPOUA FERRY.

Mr. MCGOWAN asked the Government, if they will establish a ferry service at Whangapoua? He was understood to say that this was an inlet of the sea, which was very dangerous for taking cattle across.

Mr. J. MCKENZIE said the Government had not sufficient information to say whether it was possible to establish the service asked for. The Commissioner of Crown Lands for the district had been instructed to report as to the practicability of establishing it.

MANGARAMARAMA CREEK.

Mr. HALL asked the Government, As a sum was voted for clearing the Mangaramarama Creek, and only part of that sum has been expended, will they vote the remainder this year and carry the work through?

Mr. J. MCKENZIE said that in 1889 a sum of £200 had been voted for clearing the creek, and the whole of that sum had been expended through the County Council, and there was no remainder which could be used this year.

HERBERTVILLE-WIMBLEDON MAIL.

Mr. HALL asked the Postmaster-General, if he will call tenders for carrying the mail to Herbertville and Wimbledon by way of Weber instead of by the present route? He was understood to say that it would not cost any more, and the route would be of much greater benefit to the people in the district, as it would save them the trouble of travelling many miles for their letters.

Mr. WARD said it was not intended to call for tenders *via* Weber, as the route was not regarded as practicable throughout the year, the road being impassable during winter. The advertised route took in Wimbledon, but the road between that and Weber was the part which was said to be impassable during winter.

RAILWAY UNION.

Mr. J. W. KELLY asked the Minister for Public Works if he would himself move that the charges made by the senior member for Wellington City against the Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants should be referred to the Railways Committee, or if he would give him facilities for moving such a motion.

Mr. SEDDON said, if the senior member for Wellington City would commit his charges to writing and forward them to him, he would refer the matter to the Cabinet, which would decide whether or not, in view of the reply of the Commissioners, an inquiry was neces-

sary. He thought the matter should be placed in such a way as to be put beyond doubt.

Sir R. STOUT said his charges would be found sufficiently explicit in the *Hansard* proof of his speech. He would prefer that the matter should go to a Committee, as he much desired to examine some gentlemen whose names had not been mentioned.

GOVERNMENT RAILWAYS BILL.

IN COMMITTEE.

Clause 3.—“From and after the commencement of this Act the Minister shall be *ex officio* a Commissioner, but without salary, under the said Act, in addition to three other Commissioners to be appointed from time to time under the said Act.

“The Minister shall have and may exercise all the powers of a Commissioner, may assist at their meetings and when present shall preside thereat, and shall have a deliberative and a second or casting vote in case of their being an equality of votes on any matters before the Commissioners.

“Section eight of the said Act is hereby repealed.”

Mr. PINKERTON moved, That all the words after the word “Act,” in the second line of the clause, be struck out, with the view of inserting the following words in lieu thereof, namely:—

“... the railways in the colony, now vested in the Commissioners, should again be vested in Her Majesty, and the management of the said railways should pass to the Minister, to be controlled and regulated under ‘The Public Works Act, 1882,’ and the several Acts amending the same.

“(1.) ‘The Government Railways Act, 1887,’ and all the preceding sections of this Act, except sections one and two thereof, shall be repealed:

“(2.) The appointments of the Commissioners shall be determined, but they severally shall receive appointments from the Governor as officers of the railway service of the colony, to date from the aforesaid day, for the residue of the terms of office for which they were respectively appointed as Commissioners aforesaid, and at the same rate of salary:

“(3.) All railway servants and other persons in the employ of the Commissioners shall be deemed to be the servants and employes of Her Majesty, without prejudice to any rights preserved to any of the said persons under the provisions of section seventy-six of the said Act:

“(4.) All property of every sort mentioned in section sixteen of the said Act, and which by the said section was vested in the Commissioners for any estate, shall vest absolutely in Her Majesty for the same estate:

“(5.) All transactions of any kind mentioned in section nineteen of the said Act entered into, made, or given by or to the Commissioners in connection with

any property whatever vested in the Commissioners shall be binding and may be enforced as if Her Majesty or the Minister, as the case may be, had been a party thereto:

“(6.) All powers of Her Majesty, the Governor in Council, or the Governor or Minister under any Act relating to the management, working, and maintenance of railways, and all rights and privileges accrued or accruing under or by virtue of any such Act, and which by section twenty of the said Act were authorised to be exercised, enforced, and enjoyed by the Commissioners, shall revert to and be exercised, enforced, and enjoyed respectively in manner as before the said Act was passed:

“(7.) All by-laws and regulations made by the Commissioners shall continue in operation as if they had been made under ‘The Public Works Act, 1882,’ and the several Acts amending the same; and any penalty, forfeiture, or other punishment incurred or to be incurred thereunder respectively may be enforced and recovered in the same manner:

“(8.) No action or other proceeding whatsoever commenced by or against the Commissioners shall abate or be discontinued, or be prejudicially affected, but the same shall continue and take effect in favour of or against Her Majesty or the Minister, as the case may be:

“(9.) All judgments, decrees, or orders made in favour of or against the Commissioners, and all fines and penalties imposed or incurred under ‘The Government Railways Act, 1887,’ or under any other Act in respect of any matter or thing vested in the Commissioners, and unsatisfied or unperformed, or that have not been recovered or enforced, shall be respectively enforced, levied, proceeded for, and recovered by, against, with reference to, and in the name of Her Majesty, or the Minister, in the same manner as they might have been enforced, levied, proceeded for, and recovered by, against, with reference to, and in the name of the Commissioners.”

The Committee divided on the question, “That the word ‘the,’ after the word ‘Act,’ stand part of the clause.”

AYES, 25.

Bell	Mackenzie, T.	Saunders
Buchanan	Maslin	Smith, G. J.
Buddo	Massey	Te Ao
Collins	McGuire	Thompson
Flatman	McLachlan	Wilson.
Fraser	MoNab	
Graham	Meredith	<i>Tellers.</i>
Harris	Mitchelson	Allen
Hutchison, G.	Montgomery	Buick.

NOES, 32.

Carnell	Lawry	Russell, G. W.
Crowther	McGowan	Seddon
Duncan	McKenzie, J.	Smith, E. M.
Earnshaw	McKenzie, R.	Steward
Hall	Mills	Stout
Heke	Morrison	Tanner
Hogg	Newman	Ward
Hutchison, W.	O'Regan	Willis.
Joyce	O'Rorke	<i>Tellers.</i>
Kelly, J. W.	Parata	Pinkerton
Kelly, W.	Reeves	Pirani.

PAIRS.

<i>For.</i>	<i>Against.</i>
Button	Carroll
Carncross	Stevens
Green	Larnach
Hall-Jones	Mackintosh
Lang	Duthie
Russell, W. R.	Cadman.

Majority against, 7.

Word struck out, and remainder of clause struck out.

On the question, That the words proposed by Mr. Pinkerton be inserted,

Mr. PINKERTON moved, That the word "should," in the first part of the clause, be struck out, with the view of inserting "shall."

Amendment agreed to, and the word "shall" inserted.

The Committee divided on the question, "That the words down to the end of subsection (2) be added to the Bill."

AYES, 36.

Carnell	Mackintosh	Reeves
Carroll	McGowan	Russell, G. W.
Collins	McKenzie, J.	Seddon
Crowther	McKenzie, R.	Smith, E. M.
Earnshaw	Mills	Stevens
Hall	Morrison	Steward
Heke	Newman	Tanner
Hogg	O'Regan	Ward
Hutchison, W.	O'Rorke	Willis.
Joyce	Parata	<i>Tellers.</i>
Kelly, J. W.	Pinkerton	Duncan
Kelly, W.	Pirani	Stout.
Lawry		

NOES, 27.

Bell	Lang	Montgomery
Buddo	Mackenzie, T.	Saunders
Buick	Maslin	Smith, G. J.
Button	Massey	Te Ao
Flatman	McGuire	Thompson
Fraser	McLachlan	Wilson.
Graham	McNab	<i>Tellers.</i>
Hall-Jones	Meredith	Allen
Harris	Mitchelson	Buchanan.
Hutchison, G.		

PAIRS.

<i>For.</i>	<i>Against.</i>
Cadman	Russell, W. R.
Duthie	Carncross
Larnach.	Green.

Majority for, 9.

Words added.

Mr. SEDDON moved, That subsection (8) be struck out, with the view of inserting the following in lieu thereof:—

"(3.) All persons who were in the Civil Service immediately before the twenty-eighth day of January, one thousand eight hundred and eighty-nine, shall hereafter be in the same position in such Service as if they had never left it.

"(4.) All persons in the employ of the Commissioners who are not within the terms of the last-preceding subsection shall be deemed to be the servants and employees of Her Majesty.

"(5.) The two preceding subsections shall also apply, *mutatis mutandis*, to the persons holding the office of Commissioners at the date of the passing of this Act who were in the Civil Service of the colony at the commencement of 'The Government Railways Act, 1887.'"

Amendment agreed to, and new subsections added to the Bill.

Subsections (4), (5), (6), (7), (8), and (9) of the original amendment added to the Bill.

The Committee divided on the question, "That clause 3, as amended, be agreed to."

AYES, 36.

Carnell	McKenzie, J.	Russell, G. W.
Carroll	McKenzie, R.	Seddon
Collins	Millar	Smith, E. M.
Crowther	Mills	Stevens
Duncan	Morrison	Steward
Earnshaw	Newman	Stout
Graham	O'Regan	Tanner
Hall	O'Rorke	Ward
Hogg	Parata	Willis.
Joyce	Pinkerton	<i>Tellers.</i>
Kelly, J. W.	Pirani	Kelly, W.
Lawry	Reeves	McGowan.
Mackintosh		

NOES, 24.

Allen	Hutchison, G.	Mitchelson
Buchanan	Lang	Montgomery
Buddo	Maslin	Saunders
Buick	Massey	Smith, G. J.
Button	McGuire	Te Ao.
Flatman	McLachlan	<i>Tellers.</i>
Fraser	McNab	Bell
Hall-Jones	Meredith	Wilson.
Harris		

PAIRS.

<i>For.</i>	<i>Against.</i>
Cadman	Russell, W. R.
Duthie	Carncross
Larnach.	Green.

Majority for, 12.

Motion agreed to.

Mr. SEDDON moved, That clauses 4 to 15, both inclusive, be struck out.

Motion agreed to.

Clause 16.—Board of Appeal.

Subsection (1).—"One of the Commissioners, who shall be the Chairman."

Mr. SEDDON moved to strike out the words "One of the Commissioners," with the view of inserting, in lieu thereof, "A Judge of the District Court or a Stipendiary Magistrate, to be appointed from time to time by the Governor."

Amendment agreed to.

Mr. J. W. KELLY moved the addition of the following new clause:—

"The Minister shall, at such times as may be convenient, grant to every officer or employé leave of absence; such leave of absence to be for one week in each year, and be given at one time."

Clause read a second time.

Sir R. STOUT moved, That the words "at least" be inserted after the word "week."

The Committee divided on the question, "That the words proposed to be inserted be so inserted."

AYES, 20.

Buick	McKenzie, R.	Smith, G. J.
Carnell	McLachlan	Steward
Collins	McNab	Tanner
Hall-Jones	Montgomery	Wilson.
Harris	Newman	<i>Tellers.</i>
Lang	Russell, G. W.	O'Regan
Maslin	Smith, E. M.	Stout.

NOES, 32.

Allen	Kelly, W.	Pirani
Buchanan	Lawry	Reeves
Buddo	Mackintosh	Saunders
Carroll	McGowan	Seddon
Duncan	McKenzie, J.	Stevens
Earnshaw	Meredith	Thompson
Flatman	Millar	Ward
Graham	Mills	Willis.
Hall	Morrison	<i>Tellers.</i>
Hogg	Parata	Crowther
Joyce	Pinkerton	Kelly, J. W.

PAIRS.

<i>For.</i>	<i>Against.</i>
Cadman	Russell, W. R.
Duthie	Carnecross
Larnach.	Green.

Majority against, 12.

Amendment negatived.

Sir R. STOUT moved to add the following proviso: "Provided, however, that nothing in this section shall be deemed to limit any leave of absence usually heretofore granted under the regulations now existing."

Proviso agreed to, and clause as amended added to the Bill.

Mr. SEDDON moved the addition of the following new subclause to clause 3:—

"All rights, powers, duties, and obligations now by law conferred and imposed upon the Railway Commissioners are hereby transferred to Her Majesty; and all references to the Railway Commissioners in any statute or regulation thereunder, or in any Order in Council, Proclamation, or other similar instrument, shall be construed as references to Her Majesty."

Amendment agreed to.

Bill reported, with amendments

SCHOOL-ATTENDANCE BILL.

Mr. SEDDON, in moving the second reading of this Bill, thought that honourable members would admit that there was a necessity for compulsory attendance of a number of children who were not receiving that advantage which the State thought they should receive at the time the Education Act was passed. The Education Boards and the Committees complained, and there was a general wish throughout the colony that something should be done in the direction laid down in the Bill. He felt that the desire of the Legislature was to promote the education of our youth, and that there would be no objection taken to the second reading of the Bill. There might be some Committee objections, but, as regarded the general principle, that, he thought, would be affirmed, as it met all the defects which existed under the present Act.

Mr. BUICK quite agreed with what the Premier had said upon the subject of the principle of the Bill, but he thought the measure all through was too much of a permissive character.

Mr. PIRANI thoroughly agreed with the principle of the Bill, but he thought the most important feature in it—that was, providing for a certificate from the Board to exempt a child from attending—would be a failure. If it provided for a certificate from the School Committee there might be some sense in it, but he would like to know how an Education Board situated as theirs was, some eighty miles away from the largest schools in the district, would have any idea as to whether a certificate should be granted exempting attendance.

Mr. SEDDON.—That is a Committee objection.

Mr. PIRANI said it might be a Committee objection, but he held that it affected the main principle of the Bill. He trusted the Minister in charge would recognise the importance of the suggestion, and would, in Committee, allow the measure to be altered so as to permit the School Committees of a district to grant the exemption certificates.

Mr. HALL quite agreed with the remarks made by the last speaker regarding this matter of exemption. He thought that some provision should be made whereby those children who were exempted should be inspected once a year by the Inspector of the district—say, at the district school—who should give a certificate of exemption from attendance. There were also some other minor details which he would try to amend in Committee.

Mr. MEREDITH had no doubt the Minister of Education was justified in introducing a measure of this character, if only from the number of children under the head "Industrial Schools" in the annual Education Report, which disclosed the fact that no less than 1,550 children were in our industrial schools at the present time. That proved at once to his mind that the education of those children had been criminally neglected, and that their parents were greatly to blame. As the Education Act did not provide for this difficulty,

it was right that the law should be amended. If we took the number of children on the school-rolls at the present time, and the average attendance, they compared favourably with the average attendance in the neighbouring colonies. He found, on looking into this matter, from the latest figures obtainable, that in New South Wales the average attendance was 68·48; Victoria, 69·97; South Australia, 71·65; Queensland, 70·84; and New Zealand, 78·5:

12.0. showing that the average attendance compared with the total number on the register in this colony was in excess of what it was in the neighbouring colonies. Still, he was of opinion that the average attendance ought to be higher than it was. For the past year there was a slight falling-off in the average attendance, but that might be accounted for in consequence of the prevalence of disease and the general epidemic of influenza that passed over the colony affecting our schools so much. He took exception to most of this Bill. He was in favour of the first paragraph of clause 3—that was to say, that on and after the passing of this Act it should be compulsory for all children to attend our public schools. He agreed with that. According to the Act of 1877 the power of bringing into operation the compulsory clauses of the Act rested with the School Committee in each district; and the mode of operation was usually of this character: Notice was given by one of the members of the School Committee that at the next meeting of the Committee he would move that the compulsory clause be brought into operation in the district. He approved of the first paragraph of clause 3, but he objected to the other portions of the Bill, taking the power from the School Committees and transferring it to the Board of Education, with a view, at the next remove, of placing it under the control of the central Education Department. The move was in the wrong direction, and he regretted that his honourable friend the Minister of Education had got a weakness in the direction of centralising; he wished to centralise everything in Wellington.

Mr. REEVES.—You have no right to say that.

Mr. MEREDITH said the honourable gentleman would have an opportunity to reply, and he (Mr. Meredith) thought he could point out to the satisfaction of the House that what he said was correct. If honourable members would look at the subsections of clause 3 they would find, "Provided also that the parent of any child may apply for and receive a certificate from the Board." Hitherto the parent had to apply to the School Committee, and the certificate was granted by the School Committee. If they looked, again, at clause 5 they found,—

"If any child required by this Act to attend a public school does not attend such school, the Education Board of the district in which such child resides may give the parent of such child notice in writing, in the form or to the effect of the schedule hereto."

Formerly that was done by the School Committees. They were in danger of being deprived

of this power, which was to be given to the Education Board. In his opinion, the powers of School Committees should be increased instead of being diminished. If they wanted parents to take an interest in the schools established in the various districts it was undesirable that they should be deprived of the power of controlling and managing their own schools. That power ought to be increased; therefore he regretted exceedingly that the Minister now proposed to take this power away and centre it in the Boards. Another move meant its being centred in the Central Department. This provision of the Bill would be utterly inoperative, in this way: Under the Auckland Board of Education there were a number of schools having a total attendance, according to last returns, of twenty-three thousand children. Well, let them assume that the Auckland Education Board assembled in a comfortable room in the City of Auckland, and, in solemn conclave, were considering a communication, received from a school established in the neighbourhood of Hokianga, that Willie Brown had not attended school the required number of times. This school was 180 miles from the City of Auckland; the postal communication was once a week; so that the passing of communication between the School Committee in the district and the Board of Education, and then from the Board of Education to the School Committee, would extend over a considerable time. He would take another illustration. Under the North Canterbury Board of Education there were 180 schools. He would assume that in a school in the neighbourhood of Kaikoura there were some children who attended irregularly. A communication was made to the North Canterbury Board. That Board consisted of gentlemen elected by the city and country schools, and not living further away from Christchurch than thirty miles. They knew nothing about the school in Kaikoura; and the idea of expecting the Board of Education to look after Tommy Atkins, who irregularly attended a school at Kaikoura, was absurd and ridiculous. The proper parties to look after the attendance of children were the School Committees. They understood the circumstances connected with the school life of each child, and also the families, and all the local circumstances connected with the school. This provision would be utterly inoperative, and it would mean additional expense to the Boards of Education. Their Education Boards had been decried against again and again in consequence of the large expense connected with them. Their School Committees, on the other hand, cost nothing. Month after month they met and deliberated on the welfare of their schools, without any expense whatever to the State. On behalf of the School Committees in his own district particularly he must raise his voice against the provisions of the Bill. If the honourable gentleman had introduced just one clause to bring into operation the compulsory clauses of the Education Act of 1887 in every school district throughout New Zealand

Mr. Meredith

after a certain date, that would have answered all the purposes. If School Committees were given more power than they had at present, it would increase the efficiency of the system. But, as he had observed, he considered it was a great mistake to take away from the School Committees what little power they had now, and he knew that School Committees would resent it. In fact, if the Bill were passed in its present form it would be a matter of very great difficulty to get householders to go on School Committees at all. They complained over and over again of the little power they had under the Education Act. He would not detain the House longer, but he could not allow the Bill to pass its second reading without entering his protest against its provisions. The measure had not been properly thought out. It showed at once that whoever drew up the Bill had no practical acquaintance with the matter. He did not know whether it emanated from the Minister of Education or from the Inspector-General, or from what department of the service, but he knew that it had not been properly thought out, and, further, that no person acquainted with the circumstances of our education system would for a moment endeavour to place such a Bill as this upon the statute-book.

Mr. T. MACKENZIE thought that a mistake had been made in not appointing the honourable member who had last spoken as Minister of Education. It appeared now that there was no subject that came before the House that that honourable gentleman did not profess to know infinitely more about than any other member of the House. The fact was, the House was getting thoroughly tired of the honourable gentleman. When the Government Railways Bill was under discussion the previous afternoon they had that honourable gentleman with his ponderous style speaking as if all the wisdom of the universe was concentrated within him, and wearying the House with the driest details. Now they had him criticizing this very important measure which had been brought before the House by the Minister of Education—a measure which he ventured to say was very much required, and for which the thanks of the House and the country were due to the honourable gentleman who had brought it in. He had much pleasure in supporting the Bill; and he would tender this advice to the honourable gentleman who had preceded him: that if he could possibly condense his remarks, and would present them in a more acceptable form, he would be more frequently listened to in the House.

Mr. ALLEN said the honourable member for Clutha did not know where the honourable member's remarks had come from. If he had read the report of the Auckland Education Board lately he would have found there the larger portion of the honourable gentleman's speech; only, instead of the name Tommy Brown, he would have had to read Tommy Jones: that was the only alteration that would have been necessary. With regard to the Bill, and the privileges of School Com-

mittees, there were certain privileges that School Committees did not care about, and one of the privileges that School Committees did not care about was the privilege of paying the truant officer. If the School Committees in the honourable gentleman's district were willing to pay truant officers he would suggest to the Minister of Education that he should make the Bill not applicable in that district. Certainly there were other districts where truant officers were required, and, as the School Committees could not pay for them, some other body would have to pay for them, and the only other body that possibly could pay for them was the Education Board. As it was necessary that truant officers should be appointed, in this respect the Bill was necessary.

Mr. GRAHAM said it was rather amusing, not to say ludicrous, to hear the honourable member for Clutha come in and lecture an honourable member for the way he took up the time of the House. The honourable member for Clutha had been absent during the whole evening, and spoke as if he had been paying close attention to the business of the House. Like the honourable member for Palmerston, he (Mr. Graham) quite agreed with the principle. They had compulsory education only in name in the existing Act, and it ought to be made a reality. In some points, he agreed with the present Bill, as it would rectify the difficulties which had existed for years. Clause 89 of the existing Act provided that children should attend school for at least one-half of the period in each year during which the school was usually open. This had the effect of preventing School Committees from compelling the attendance of children until half the year was past. The present Bill made provision to render it compulsory that children should attend school a certain number of times in each week. In his district people kept their children away from school, and the Committee could not compel them to attend, because they knew the Act as well as the Committee. Therefore he agreed with the object sought to be attained by clause 3. But with reference to who should exercise the compulsory clauses of the Act he did not agree with the honourable gentleman. He thought the Committee was the proper body to exercise the compulsory clauses. The honourable gentleman might answer that they had not done so efficiently heretofore; but it had not been mandatory—it was simply optional on the part of Committees; and in many instances they had not liked to do so. If this were altered so as to read, "The Committee shall give the parents notice," instead of "may"—

An Hon. MEMBER.—How would you compel them?

Mr. GRAHAM.—By saying that they shall bring the compulsory clauses into force, and then they would carry it out as their bounden duty. At present, it being optional, they did not do so. He knew that was the case in his own district. With reference to exemptions, he agreed with the honourable member for Palmerston, who had said school districts might be, and in fact often were eighty or a

hundred miles from where the Board met, and members of the Board might know nothing about the school district or its surroundings. The new Act was simply clause 90 of the old Act with the name of the Board substituted for that of the Committee, and he thought that was a step in the wrong direction. He appreciated the efforts of the Minister of Education in his desire to bring about compulsory attendance, and would assist him in every way he could in that direction, but when the Bill got into Committee he hoped the Minister would agree to amend it in the direction of giving the Committees more power rather than less: the measure would then tend to the benefit of education in the colony.

Mr. T. MACKENZIE, as a matter of personal explanation, said the honourable gentleman had stated he (Mr. Mackenzie) was not attending to his duties in the House. As a matter of fact, he had been in the lobby all the time, and came in to vote, but he could not stand the speeches of the honourable member for Ashley.

Mr. McLACHLAN said it was all very well for the honourable member for Clutha to sneer at the honourable member for Ashley, but he thought the honourable member for Ashley had a good deal of experience as a member of an Education Board, and he probably knew that to remove the control from Committees to the central body would be a grievous mistake. Many honourable members were striving after local government, and in no branch of local government was it more desirable to have local control than in the matter of compulsory school attendance. They had the local policemen to enforce the law, or, at least, they were supposed to do so, if the machinery of the law were put in force by the School Committee. He thought they ought to give considerably more power to local Committees than they had at present in regard to compulsory attendance. It was too small a subject for such a large body as the central Board to attend to, and he would be prepared to support any amendment moved by the honourable member for Ashley in the direction of extending the powers of the local Committees.

Mr. REEVES said that the objection to the clause which removed the duty of prosecution from the Committee to the Board was really the only objection that had been raised; but the Bill did not hang on that clause entirely. The Bill was one to endeavour to improve the attendance at the State schools; and gentlemen who understood the State-school system, and who were enthusiastic supporters of it, like the honourable member for Nelson City, accepted the Bill as a whole, although they wished to improve it in the direction he had indicated. He thought honourable members sympathized with him in his wish to improve the attendance at the schools, and that was all he asked for. He would be quite prepared, when the Bill went into Committee, to take the vote on that particular clause, and if the Committee beat him he would take the Bill in its amended shape, and would not drop it entirely because of that one alteration. They

Mr. Graham

desired to try the experiment of putting the task of prosecution on the Boards instead of on the Committees, for the simple reason that it had been shown that the Committees were very reluctant to exercise the power. A Committee would not prosecute parents of children, as there was often close personal relation between the Committee and parents. For that reason he had thought it advisable to try the experiment of putting the duty upon the Board. At the same time he quite admitted there was some force in what the honourable member for Nelson City had said, that under the present Bill the machinery would be much better than under the old Act. The duty would be more mandatory on the Committees, and therefore there was some reason for supposing that the Committees would exercise their duties better in the future than they had done in the past. However, this was not a Bill of one clause, as the honourable member for Ashley had suggested, and it was quite unfair for an honourable gentleman to stand up and object to nearly the whole Bill, and then, finally, after making a long speech, to be discovered to be only objecting to one clause, and one which was not the chief clause. He might suggest to his honourable friend that, though he was a supporter of the education system, and a valuable supporter, and had devoted a great deal of his time and attention to it, and did very good service in administering the Act in Canterbury, still he must not think that the whole of the wisdom of New Zealand was centred in those who administered the Act in North Canterbury. It was possible for even so humble and benighted a person as the Minister at the head of the department to know something about the subject. He admitted that there had been a superstition to the contrary, but it was only a superstition. Even the central officers did know something about the work they did. If his honourable friend would turn that over in his mind and treat him (Mr. Reeves) as an equal he thought they would get on very well together, and work side by side in their endeavour to improve the system. That was all he asked. He thanked the House for the liberal tone in which the Bill had been received. He believed, if the Bill passed through all its stages, even if amended in the one particular mentioned, it would greatly improve the school-attendance in New Zealand. He was quite prepared to allow the Bill to go to Committee with that understanding.

Bill read a second time.

The House adjourned at half-past two o'clock a.m.

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

Thursday, 13th September, 1894.

First Reading.

The Hon. the SPEAKER took the chair at half-past two o'clock.

PRAYERS.

FIRST READING.

Ngaere and other Blocks Native Claims Adjustment Bill.

The Council adjourned at a quarter to three o'clock p.m.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.

Thursday, 13th September, 1894.

First Reading—Second Readings—Third Readings—Cyanide Solution—Kuaotunu-Whangapoua Mail-service—Gebbie's Valley Telegraph—Okain's Bay Postal Service—Public Works Statement—Major C. Brown—Flax—Hikurangi Unemployed—Gore-Kelso Railway—Adjournment—Government Railways Bill—Licensing Bill—Mining Companies Bill—Criminal Code Bill.

Mr. SPEAKER took the chair at half-past two o'clock.

PRAYERS.

FIRST READING.

New Zealand Consols Bill.

SECOND READINGS.

Hastings Borough Loan Validation and Empowering Bill, Bankruptcy Bill.

THIRD READINGS.

New Zealand Company's Land-claimants Bill, Westland and Nelson Coalfields Administration Bill.

CYANIDE SOLUTION.

Mr. MCGOWAN asked the Government, If they will take into consideration the importance and necessity of having the cyanide solution used in gold-saving manufactured in the colony, with a view to relieve the mining industry from the charges and monopoly at present claimed by the Cassel Gold-extraction Company for the use of this process? In explanation of the question, he would say that any of the freezing companies of the colony could produce this chemical for the purpose of gold-saving. The question, however, was put more with the view of putting the Government in the position of testing the validity of certain patent rights claimed by the Cassel Gold-extraction Company, the general opinion being that this company's claim was not a good one. If the Government should take up that position, it would put the company in a position of defending its claim, and the result, he believed, would be beneficial to the gold-mining industry.

Mr. SEDDON said this was a matter which had engaged the attention of his honourable colleague the Minister of Mines. There was no doubt it was an important subject, and that the colony had suffered owing to the monopoly that existed. As to what the legal position was, that was a matter of some doubt; but by the improvement of processes that had been evolved at the Thames they thought there would be no necessity for taking action in the direction the honourable gentleman suggested. However, they were watching the matter very

carefully, and would do their best to promote the mining industry as far as they could.

KUAOTUNU-WHANGAPOUA MAIL-SERVICE.

Mr. MCGOWAN asked the Postmaster-General, If he will open up mail-communication between Kuaotunu and Whangapoua, for the convenience of residents in both these townships?

Mr. WARD might say, in reply, that this matter would be considered when the tenders for mail-services came in.

GEBBIE'S VALLEY TELEGRAPH.

Mr. MONTGOMERY asked the Postmaster-General, If he will establish telephone communication at Gebbie's Valley?

Mr. WARD said the estimated cost of this line was £130, and the estimated revenue £7. The annual deficiency, after providing interest of cost, maintenance, *et cetera*, would be £13. If a contribution of £52 was made, the Government would undertake the construction of the line.

OKAIN'S BAY POSTAL SERVICE.

Mr. MONTGOMERY asked the Postmaster-General, If he will give additional postal facilities at Okain's Bay by granting a subsidy to a steamer calling there? He might say that the steamer called at Okain's Bay on Tuesdays and Thursdays, and if a small subsidy were granted they would undertake to bring the mails there. It would also have the additional advantage of inducing the steamer to call punctually. He hoped the Postmaster-General would see his way to give these postal facilities.

Mr. WARD said instructions had been given to the Inspector now in the district to inquire and report, and on receipt of his report the matter would be decided.

PUBLIC WORKS STATEMENT.

Captain RUSSELL asked the Minister for Public Works, When he will bring down the Public Works Statement? The session was now getting on, and he hoped they would get an answer of the Minister that they were going to get the Public Works Statement very shortly.

Mr. SEDDON was very much pleased to tell the honourable member that the Public Works Statement would be brought down immediately the Government knew what provision it was necessary to make in consequence of the policy Bills they proposed to pass.

Captain RUSSELL said that did not afford the House any information. He would like to know what business the Government proposed to take.

Mr. SEDDON said that on the following day they intended to go on with the cheap-money proposals. After that, they would take the proposals under which money would be obtainable for the purpose of purchasing private lands, and for the purpose of roading lands already held by the Crown. It was impossible

to bring down the Public Works Statement until they knew whether or not the proposals contained in these measures would be carried by the House, because these would have to be provided for in the Public Works Statement. They intended to bring down item by item, and to get the approval of the House, but they must know the total amount available before they could do that.

MAJOR C. BROWN.

Mr. McGUIRE asked the Government, if they will cause an inquiry to be made into the charges against Major Charles Brown, an old settler of the colony and an ex-member of this House, as to the grounds for the cancellation of his license as a Native interpreter and the removal of his name from the list of Justices of the Peace for the colony; such charges to be inquired into by the Chief Judge of the Native Land Court, an officer of whose Court he was? He asked this question in the interests of simple justice to the distinguished gentleman, who had occupied a seat in Parliament, and had also been Superintendent of the province, and on several occasions had acted in the Government service, without a stain on his character. This gentleman asked for an inquiry to be made relating to why he had been dismissed as a licensed interpreter, and struck off the roll of Justices of the Peace. Not only had this gentleman been in the House, but he had also been a Cabinet Minister before, perhaps, any of the honourable gentlemen now on the Treasury benches thought of entering Parliament. He asked that the question put on the Order Paper should be answered in a generous way by the Prime Minister. They should take into consideration the services of this distinguished man, his years, and everything else, and should realise how anxious he was for an inquiry, so that he might be able, if possible, to remove the stain off his character and from his good name before his last call from this world. He therefore trusted that the Prime Minister would meet him in a fair way, and grant a full inquiry by a judicial officer who thoroughly understood the question—namely, the Chief Judge of the Native Land Court.

Mr. SEDDON said it was not the intention of the Government to grant the gentleman named in the question a special inquiry. The Government did not act without having good and sufficient cause for the course which they took. They had before them the report of the case which was held before Judge Kettle, and, knowing the status held by Judge Kettle, and how careful he was, they felt satisfied that he would not have made the remarks he had unless he had good grounds for them. To set up a tribunal to say whether or not Judge Kettle was right in what he had done and stated would, he thought, be an incorrect thing to do. If the person aggrieved was not satisfied he had what was open to every colonist—there was Parliament to appeal to.

Mr. McGUIRE said the honourable gentleman had overlooked the fact that no inquiry

whatever had been made into this gentleman's conduct.

Mr. SPEAKER said the honourable gentleman could not make a further explanation at present.

Mr. McGUIRE said he would take another opportunity of dealing with the question.

FLAX.

Mr. E. M. SMITH asked the Government, Seeing that the time is now past when claims may be presented for bonuses for the encouragement and improvement of the flax industries of New Zealand, under terms and conditions offered as recommended by the Manufactures and Industries Committee of last Parliament, will they state for the information of honourable members how many claims have been sent in, and under what headings, and when will the trial test be concluded and the bonuses given, and who are the judges, and will they report on the merits and demerits of machines and processes of the persons claiming the bonuses? He was interested in this matter, and was a great believer in the importance of the flax industry. He would be glad to hear whether any good results had come from the action of the Committee which was set up last year.

Mr. J. McKENZIE thought the honourable gentleman would do better to wait for some time for an answer to this question. He could not answer the whole of the question at present, but he might tell the honourable gentleman and the House that fifteen applications had been received under one heading and nine applications under another. The judges were testing the various appliances, and, that being so, he thought the honourable gentleman should wait until the experts completed their duties.

HIKURANGI UNEMPLOYED.

Mr. THOMPSON asked the Minister of Labour,—(1.) Whether it is true that a number of men have been sent from Christchurch to Hikurangi to work on the railway? (2.) Is the Minister aware that a large number of men in the Hikurangi district are unemployed and in distressed circumstances, but have been refused work by the Engineer in charge of the railway-works? (3.) Will the Minister inform this House what special claims the workmen of Christchurch have upon the Government, that they should be sent up to Hikurangi at the expense of the State and provided with work, while those who reside in the district, and are equally in need of work, should be refused it?

Mr. REEVES said it was true that men were sent up from Christchurch to Hikurangi. With regard to the second part of the question, the Government had no reason to believe that there were a large number of men in the district in distressed circumstances beyond those whom they took on. Christchurch men were sent up there, and they took on such men as they believed to be in need.

Mr. THOMPSON.—How many?

Mr. Seddon

Mr. REEVES said, as to the claims Christchurch men had upon such work, of course Christchurch paid taxes, out of which the cost of public works in all parts of the colony was defrayed. If it was to be stated that towns and districts in which no public works were going on were not to have any claim on the State for their poor and distressed, then he thought that those districts would probably have some claim to be exempted from contributing so largely to the construction of public works in other districts.

GORE-KELSO RAILWAY.

Mr. FRASER asked the Minister for Public Works, if he will take the necessary steps during the recess to have a resurvey executed of a portion of the Gore-Kelso line, so that when the time arrives for the colony to resume railway-construction, and complete the lines authorised in the past, a route may be adopted which will confer the greatest benefit on the settlers in this important farming district? He might state that two trial surveys had already been made, and working-plans prepared for some distance.

Mr. SEDDON said surveys had been made and working-plans prepared for a railway from Kelso to the Waitaki Township—ten miles—and trial surveys had been made of the remaining portion of the line—about thirteen miles—to connect with the main line at East Gore. There was therefore sufficient information to enable the character and approximate cost of the construction of the railway to be estimated. They anticipated that the cost to complete the surveys would be about £350. As to the necessity for the work, or whether the time had arrived for the work to be done, that was, of course, a matter for consideration in connection with the Public Works Statement and estimates.

ADJOURNMENT.

Mr. THOMPSON was very sorry to have to take the course of moving the adjournment of the House, but the reply of the Minister of Labour to his question was so unsatisfactory that he felt bound to do so. He wished to state at once that so long as the public works in the North of Auckland were carried on by the Public Works Department or the Land Department there was no difficulty or friction of any kind. It was only since the Minister of Labour and his department had intruded themselves upon that district that the whole difficulty had arisen. He had no wish whatever to say one word against the unfortunate men who were to be taken from Christchurch to that district. There was one advantage which they would have there: they would breathe the air of freedom and be released from the continual humbug that had been breathed into their ears for years by the honourable gentleman. To show how the "unemployed" question had been met by the Department of Labour—he presumed, acting under the instructions of the honourable gentleman—he would read to the House a copy of the instruc-

tions which were sent to the Engineer in charge of the works:—

"No single men are to be employed, whether gum-diggers or not, unless they have parents or relatives dependent on them, and no men, whether married or single, who have been lately employed on railway-works. The class of men for whose interests the works were started are men who are regular gum-diggers, and have been so for a considerable period, but who have got into distressed circumstances owing to the low price of gum. No man shall be regarded as a gum-digger who only works at gum-digging at fitful intervals, or who has only taken to gum-digging within the last two or three months. Please also note that no men are to be regarded as married unless their wives and families are residing in the district."

3.0. The result of these instructions had been that a system of espionage had been established by the agents of the Department of Labour, and inquiries of a most disgraceful nature had been made of men who had applied for work. A small number of men were put to work a short time ago in swamps where they were up to their knees in water, and the rates fixed were so low that, after working for a week or two, they found they could not earn more than 2s. 7d. a day, which was not sufficient to pay their "tucker" bill. The result was that these men knocked off work. They wrote and telegraphed to him, and he forwarded the letters and telegrams to the Premier, showing the distressed state they were in. And yet, while every obstacle possible was put in the way of employing these men, a contingent had been sent up from Christchurch. It was an unfortunate thing that the Minister of Labour or his department had ever had any connection with that part of the colony. The working-men up there were a different class from those the honourable gentleman was in the habit of mixing with. They were not men who agitated for work when they did not want it. They were, in most instances, men who would sooner go hungry than apply for work to the State. Yet these men, owing to the low price of gum, had been placed in such circumstances that it was impossible for them to get a living on anything else; and, unfortunately for them, all credit in the district was practically stopped. The banks had stopped credit, and consequently the storekeepers had stopped credit, and, unless employment of some kind was found for these men, they had to go without food. He was sorry to have to say anything about this matter, because until within the last few months everything had gone on satisfactorily, and if the Minister of Labour and his agents had kept out of the district they would have had nothing of that kind. But, for some reason or another, men had been almost insulted when they applied for work. Questions of a most insulting kind had been put to men as to their circumstances, as to their wives and families, and they had been treated in such a way that they would scarcely go near any agency of the department to apply for work. The workmen in that part of the

colony had not been accustomed to be spoken to and treated as paupers. They were not paupers; and it was an unfortunate position for the colony to find itself in, that the bone and sinew of the country—the genuine working-men, who had made New Zealand what it was—were now treated as common paupers by the agents of the Labour Department. He objected to that kind of treatment, and he hoped the honourable gentleman and his department would keep away from that part of the colony as much as possible. They were not wanted there; and unless these men were treated as they ought to be treated, and if they were to be insulted, and their self-respect was to be destroyed, and they were to be treated as common paupers, the sooner a Labour Department ceased to exist the better. It was a very serious matter to the men there that, while honest and industrious men in the district were deprived of work, a contingent of working-men was carted up from the honourable gentleman's own constituency—his own constituents—the very men whom the honourable gentleman had been the means of bringing to the verge of starvation by his actions; and he failed to see why that honourable gentleman should use his position as Minister of Labour to have his own constituents shipped in contingents all over the country, and work found for them in the electorates of other members, while local men quite as deserving were not employed. He failed to see what special claim these men had. He was sorry to see them reduced to a state of poverty, but the honourable gentleman was to a large extent responsible for it, and he hoped those men who had been sent up North would remain there a sufficiently long time to have their eyes opened as to the causes which had been at work for the last two or three years reducing men to these circumstances. He ventured to say, if they thought fit to go back to Canterbury, they would go back with much broader views, and very different views as regarded the honourable gentleman and his actions. They would not worship the Minister of Labour, and they would have very different political opinions if they ever reached Canterbury again. If the same rates of pay that were fixed for those unfortunate men who had been living in the district were offered to the men from Canterbury they would stay a very short time there, but whether they would be able to find their way back he did not know. He hoped the honourable gentleman, in future, before shipping away his own constituents to other parts of the colony, would at least give those who were in distressed circumstances in the localities an equal opportunity to earn their living honestly.

Mr. REEVES said the honourable gentleman who had just sat down had given them one of those characteristic harangues to which he was accustomed, in that graceful, gracious, pleasant, and conciliatory manner of his, which was so well known in the House, and which had for six years endeared him to all. That gentleman, while making a speech which he ventured to characterize as a most flagrant

piece of touting for political support in his own district, had gone out of his way to make a long, personal, and entirely unprovoked attack upon him. The honourable gentleman and he had known each other for a number of years. The honourable gentleman had, no doubt, his own opinion of him, which he took every opportunity to express: he had his opinion of the honourable gentleman, which he did not waste the time of the House by expressing, but he assured the honourable gentleman it was of a very clear and distinct character. Ever since the day when the honourable gentleman began his career by persecuting Sir Julius Vogel on account of a physical infirmity under which he was suffering, to the present time, he (Mr. Reeves) had had his idea of the sort of man he was. His idea of the honourable gentleman was very distinct in connection with his attack on the late Mr. Sperrey, and the well-deserved chastisement he then received from the honourable member for Hawke's Bay. No man ever got severer treatment, or deserved it more, than the honourable gentleman on that occasion. But, unfortunately, it did not seem to have taught him to conduct himself better, because, on every occasion when bringing up any matter of this sort, invariably, instead of keeping to statements of fact, he went out of his way to make personal attacks on somebody or other, and, above all things, if ever he could get a chance, on the unfortunate Labour Department and the Minister of Labour. What the department had done to the honourable gentleman or his district he had never been able to discover, because until the present occasion they had his own admission that they never went near his district, nor had anything to do with it. But for some reason characteristic of the rancorous animosity of the honourable gentleman he never lost an opportunity of attacking the Minister as the head, or any agent connected with the department. Honourable gentlemen would, no doubt, remember these things and be prepared to take a very liberal discount off the characteristic tirade they had just listened to. With regard to this contingent of a score of men who had been sent up, what were they sent up to do? To work on public works—paid for by whom? By the honourable gentlemen's constituents? Did the Whangarei district pay for those works? Not a bit of it. The works had been started and were being carried on for the benefit of that district by the taxpayers of the colony. The taxpayers of the South had paid their share year after year in the past to carry on public works in that district. If the dictum was to be laid down that not only were public works in a district to be paid for by the population of the colony as a whole, but that the engagement of those employed on local public works must be a purely local matter, you would find large and important districts kicking against those public works altogether. It must be remembered there were several districts in the South which received no direct benefit at all from the public-works expenditure of the Government. The public-works expenditure in

Mr. Thompson

the Provincial District of Canterbury had been nil, and yet the taxpayers there went on being taxed year after year, in order that public works might be carried on elsewhere. He did not say that was unjust: he thought it was only right that the settled districts of the colony should contribute, through the general revenue, to the carrying-out of settlement in outlying districts; but the taxpayers in the districts which were paying for the construction of public works elsewhere were not to be told by the honourable gentleman that they were not to have a job or a day's work on any railway or road which might be started in the district represented by that lordly gentleman. He said the principle of keeping those in the towns from all share in employment by the State on country works was utterly unfair and heartless. If the honourable gentleman's argument was to be accepted, and the principle he laid down was to be acted upon, all he could say was that all hope of grappling with the "unemployed" question in the country by any means such as they had adopted must come to an end. The Labour Department was based on two principles, one being the circulation of labour. It was well known that a great deal of the congestion of labour in New Zealand was of a purely local character. In one district it was found that there were too many men, and very little work; in another district there was work, and not enough men to do it. Therefore the Labour Department was started, to promote the free circulation of labour from one end of the colony to the other—to take districts where labour was congested and relieve them by sending out labour to districts where the congestion did not obtain. The honourable gentleman would say there were men in his district who would like to have work. But it was a question of degree of necessity, and the Government took care to inquire, and to satisfy themselves that the needs of a certain number of married men in the South were greater, and their distress keener, than the distress which existed in the district of the honourable gentleman. The Government made inquiries for distressed gum-diggers who should be married men, and could not find them; they found a certain number, and they were employed. It was only fair to tell the House what had been the relative numbers of the men who were taken from the district, and from outside. In the last few months, in that part of New Zealand, about sixty-three men had been put on co-operative works; the number sent up from the South had been nineteen, and, at the very time the nineteen were put on, twelve were taken from the locality and put on the works.

MR. THOMPSON.—How many local men were put on those works?

MR. REEVES said he would inquire. He had been informed that there had been sixty-three; but, at the time the nineteen men were sent up from the South, twelve men were put on from the locality. Regarding the statements that the men were starved, and had to work for 2s. 10d. a day, and that they had

been grossly insulted by the Labour officials, he might mention that their average earnings during last month were 7s. each a day. The Labour Department officials simply applied the same test and asked the same questions as they did in all parts of the colony. It was absolutely necessary that married men should get the preference over single men, and that precaution should be taken against gross and flagrant impositions, as it was perfectly well known that there had been instances where men had stated they were married men when they were not married men. There had been cases in the colony in which men had stated that they had five and six children dependent upon them when they only had two or three; and they had stated that their widowed mothers and relatives depended upon them when they had no burdens of the kind. Therefore it had been a common occurrence, and the universal custom of the Labour officials, to take reasonable precaution to see that they were not being humbugged or imposed upon. In the interest of the taxpayer it had been necessary to do that, and he ventured to say that if such precautions had not been taken the Labour Department would have been subject to ridicule throughout the colony, and that it would have been imposed upon by every "deadbeat" and loafer in the colony. With regard to these men having been insulted, was it an insult that they should be asked questions of the kind? If men came to the Government for relief or for work on the score that they were in distress, and said that the State must help them to live, they ought not to be sentimental or sensitive. That sort of thing could not be endured, and it was necessary, in the interests of the department, that these simple questions should be asked. The men had not been insulted, and he declined to believe that they had been afraid to go near the Labour officials on that ground. The honourable gentleman had further stated that he (Mr. Reeves) had insulted the working-men in his district, and for that reason the men had been afraid to go near the Labour officials to ask for work. He believed, however, that the working-men in that district were very well represented by the honourable gentleman. He was their representative, and he believed he represented them very well, and, that being so, he ventured to say that they were not the sort of men to be afraid to go and ask for work when they wanted it. His experience of the honourable gentleman had been that he had never been afraid to ask for what he wanted, or for what he thought he ought to get. With reference to the personal remarks which had been made with regard to himself—namely, that he had brought his (Mr. Thompson's) constituents to the verge of starvation—if the policy which the Government were carrying out was bringing the working-classes to the verge of starvation, why did the honourable gentleman support it? The honourable gentleman, being a Government supporter, was a partaker in the iniquity he now condemned. The Labour

Department and the Government would make reasonable concessions, and would come to the rescue of men who were in distress whenever they could do so without loss to the taxpayer, but they would make a very careful selection of those men who were to be employed. They would assist those who were most seriously in want, whether they came from the North Island or the South Island, from the town or from the country.

Mr. HOUSTON did not intend to say anything to hurt the feelings of any honourable member, but at the same time he quite disagreed with the principle laid down by the Minister of Labour. It was a well-known fact throughout the length and breadth of the colony that the inhabitants of the North of Auckland had never come to the State praying for assistance in the shape of relief-works. At the present time large numbers of men in the North of Auckland were almost destitute, and he thought if the State should give employment at all it should be given to the men resident in the district. He entirely disagreed with the Minister in saying that it was right and proper to bring men from one part of the colony to work in another if the men living in the district were in better circumstances than those coming from the other district. If the men living in the district wanted work it should be given to them in preference. Reference had been made to the railway-works in the honourable member for Marsden's district. In those cases the settlers in the district ought to have the advantage over all others. The settlers had at the present time a great deal to contend with owing to the low price of gum. In many cases they were in destitute circumstances as compared with other parts of the colony. The North of Auckland had never raised the cry of the unemployed. The first cry of the unemployed came from the district these men had been sent from. He entirely disagreed with the principle laid down by the Minister of Labour.

Mr. EARNSHAW said the honourable member who had moved the adjournment of the House had forgotten that the principle which the Government had laid down was that they would only find work for the unemployed in those districts where they had the money to spend for public-works construction, and where it had been voted on the estimates. That was the principle which had been laid down; and the action of the Government in moving men up and down New Zealand to those places where they had got the money to spend in the prosecution of public works was a proper method of dealing with unemployed labour. If it were true that the North of Auckland had never had reason to come to the House to provide work for the unemployed it was their good fortune. It had been the misfortune of other places that they had had to ask for work for their unemployed. He could quite understand that at the present time, owing to the condition of the gum-market, things in the North of Auckland were not in a very good state, and he could fully realise that the fact of a number of men going to that

part of the colony to partake with the local men in the prosecution of public works led the local men under those circumstances to feel that they were injured. But that had been going on all over New Zealand; and what had brought him to his feet now was the statement regarding the men's earnings—namely, 2s. 7d. a day. If they looked through last year's returns they found that the average on the Kamo-Hikurangi Railway was 6s., 7s., and 8s. a day, while the average payment for skilled labour was over 13s. a day. That was the average paid in the district. He wished to point out that in the Dunedin district far lower rates had been ruling. In the Catlin's district, in Otago, the rates paid last year were from 1s. 10d. to 7s., which was the highest. Taking the whole of the Catlin's district, the general average was about 3s. to 3s. 6d. a day, while on other works in the colony the average rate had been from 5s. to 8s. a day for the same class of work. It was not for him to say where the discrepancy came in, but he was of opinion that it was owing to the surveyor of the district, and he put the blame on Mr. Adams, of Dunedin, so far as the low prices paid in the Catlin's district were concerned. The weather had much to do with it: that had to be taken into consideration, and higher rates should be paid for work in a wet district than in a dry district. The Government should take that into consideration. So far as the Catlin's district was concerned, the men had been most unfairly and illiberally dealt with, and it was most improper to find lower rates ruling in bush districts like Catlin's River, while the average wages earned on railroad-formation was 7s. 6d. a day. He altogether demurred to the suggestion that men should not be moved about the colony where the work was going on. If they were to say they would find work for the unemployed, irrespective of public works provided for on the estimates, then there would be no necessity to remove men from one province to another; but if they were going to construct public works according to the votes on the estimates, and solely to absorb the unemployed, then the department, of course, would have to remove men from the congested centres to where the work was. He agreed with the honourable member for Marsden that 2s. 7d. a day was not a fair rate to pay men for working in swampy ground four days a week, while men in other parts of the province, on better ground, were earning far higher rates. This question of the range of wages required the earnest consideration of the Minister of Labour, the Minister for Public Works, and the Minister of Lands, and the time would come, if the co-operative system was to be maintained,—and it ought to be maintained,—when the Ministry would have to grapple with it. Otherwise, with wages ranging from 1s. 10d. a day to 13s. 10d. a day, the system would break down. It would not be equal to the unequal strain, and could not stand it.

Mr. E. M. SMITH said he had no desire to join in this debate, but when he heard the honourable member for Marsden putting on his boxing-gloves as usual, and making the state-

Mr. Reeves

ments he had made in the style he had and in the language that he used, he thought that his own time would come, and, when he heard the Minister getting up and defending himself and his department in the able manner that he had done, he felt that he could indorse all the statements that had fallen from the Minister of Labour. That honourable gentleman had depicted the political character of the honourable member for Marsden very truly. He (Mr. Smith) had sat in that House since 1890, and he had never known the honourable gentleman, when speaking of public matters and of public men, to say one kind word or to express any sympathy. He was generally denouncing everybody, and upon every occasion. Now, he (Mr. Smith) wished to say this: that he was sent there not to indulge in personalities, but to do the best he could for his district and for the colony as a whole, and there was no speech which he had ever placed in *Hansard* which had had the slightest resemblance to personality. The honourable member for Marsden had complained of the manner in which the works were carried on in his district. He (Mr. Smith) knew how differently they were carried on in the district he represented. He knew the Minister of Education and the Minister of Lands were meeting the cases of want of employment as best they could. They had men sent up from Christchurch to the Taranaki District because the local body, including the Mayor and Councillors, had repeatedly appealed to the Government to do something for those men who were on the verge of starvation, and after repeated applications some of the men had been sent up to his district. How had they been employed? They had been employed on road-making, and if there were any men in the honourable member for Marsden's district who wanted employment let them be sent down to the Taranaki District. The Government gave them work at schedule prices. The Government were not going to increase the pay of a particular man because he could not earn as much as other men earned. There was a system by which these men could provide for themselves and their families. In addition to that, to prevent their going back to the street-corners, what were the Government doing? They were setting aside bush-land for settlement, and in the meantime opening work for the men on the roads, and as soon as those bush-lands were cleared men would be put on the land. The Government were doing for the working-men all they possibly could do with the money at their command. They were not allowing the men to earn extraordinary wages, but were giving them fair wages. They were not only providing work for those men, but were making a main arterial road for the opening of the country from Taranaki to Auckland—a road which should have been made over twenty years ago. By denouncing the system as being wrong the honourable member for Marsden showed that he had no interest in the part of the colony he came from. He had only risen so that the honourable member's state-

ment should not be put into *Hansard* and go forth without some rebutting evidence against it. He (Mr. Smith) had a perfect right to show the injustice of the honourable member in the manner in which he dealt with this question. The honourable gentleman was opposed to almost everything which the Government did in the interests of the working-men. As long as he (Mr. Smith) had sat in that House, as long as he represented the important and intelligent constituency which had sent him in by a majority of five hundred to represent it, he would do his duty, and support the best interests of the district, and also the best interests of the colony at large. He hoped the honourable gentleman, when dealing with him, would deal with him as a gentleman. He was very glad the Minister for Labour had said what he did, and he hoped that what the Minister of Labour had said would be a check upon the honourable member for Marsden in future. He was sure that the honourable member was not advancing the interests of the working-class by denouncing the Labour Department. That department had got to meet extraordinary cases, and they were doing it to the best of their ability, and there were some very hard cases to be dealt with. He gave the Government very great credit for the work they were doing. They were doing useful work, and they were not wasting one penny of public money in doing it. They were spending money wisely, and when it was spent it would not be lost. When an arterial road was made through New Zealand it meant that the lands would be opened and a means of communication given through one district to another; and if there were any more of those unemployed down South he said, Gather them all up and put them down in Taranaki. The people there would not denounce them, and they would give the Government credit for what they were doing.

Mr. McGUIRE regretted that he could not agree with the honourable member for New Plymouth, who had just sat down. He did not want the unemployed from all parts of New Zealand and the Australian Colonies to be dumped down in Taranaki, to compete with the working-men in that provincial district. His constituents were already complaining bitterly that men were sent from other places to do the work that they should be engaged to do. He feared that the Labour Bureau had a demoralising effect on the working-people, and the system did not find favour with the honest, industrious man. He was sorry to inform the House that a number of working-men from his own district had come down to Wellington, finding that they could not get work locally under the co-operative system, and were enrolled on the Labour Bureau, paying their own expenses here, and the Bureau sent them back again at the cost of the taxpayers. This was not in the interests of the country. It had the effect of taking away the self-respect from the men when it maintained them by placing them on works of this kind. There had been plenty of work in that district until this sys-

tem was established, but, unfortunately, it was not so now. The other day, when he was in that district, the first meeting of unemployed that he had ever seen there asked him to interview the Government, so that the local people might get employment. He interviewed the Government, but nothing, unfortunately, had been done for the people of that district up to the present time. They complained bitterly of men being sent there from other places whilst some of their own people were out of employment. This was not in the true interests of the country. He did not rise to speak particularly on this question. He had risen to speak on the question he had asked that day, and to which he had received a very unsatisfactory answer—an answer not on the lines of justice, or of kindly consideration of an old and distinguished servant of this colony—a man who at one time was an ornament to that House and a credit to the country; a man who served in the very first Parliament under the New Zealand Constitution; a man who in 1852 was Superintendent of a province; a man who in 1865 was Colonial Treasurer in a Ministry. This man, without the slightest notice, without any inquiry, in his old age—for he was past threescore and ten years—had his little billet of Native interpreter, his only means of earning a livelihood, taken away, and he was also removed off the roll of Justices of the Peace. A stigma had been cast upon this gentleman's good name; and he thought it was the duty of the Ministry to see that an inquiry was made into it. Not only had this man been a member of that House and a Cabinet Minister, but he had been a distinguished officer in the field, and was a man who had rendered great service to the country. Yet the service of such a man was to receive no consideration at the hands of the Government. It did not speak well for the Premier's sense of justice, who, without investigating the case in question, had arrived at a decision. It was his duty, at the very least, to cause a full and searching inquiry, which this gentleman asked for, to be made into the whole case, and to give him an opportunity in his old age to remove the slur which had been cast upon his good name. He thought it was the very least the Government could have done. He only mentioned certain services with which this gentleman had been connected in order that members who did not know the circumstances might understand the sort of man he was. He was appointed in the early days of the colony an engineer officer by the Imperial commander; he commanded an expedition that saved the lives of hundreds of settlers at the commencement of the war; he was four times elected a member of that House, and was Superintendent of his province; he was thanked on several occasions by that House; he was the representative agent of the Government, and was compelled to act on his own judgment; he was thanked on several occasions for services by Parliament. Now, when his means had fallen away from him, in 1890, he obtained a

Mr. McGuire

license as Native interpreter. This was his only means of livelihood; but even this had been taken away from him in a most unjust manner. For years he had been Civil Commissioner on the Coast, and had taken an important part in the settlement of the whole Native difficulty on the Waimate Plains, and he was thanked by Mr. Bryce for the services he had rendered him. Major Brown wanted his case to be fully investigated before the Chief Judge of the Native Land Court. He had asked the Government repeatedly to give him the opportunity of a full and searching inquiry into the matter which was alleged against him. He thought that the House should pass a resolution that day ordering that this old gentleman, who had done valuable service to the country, should have a full and searching inquiry, and, if he was guilty, the guilt would fall upon him, but, in the name of everything that was just and honourable, they should not allow an old gentleman to go down to his grave with a stain on his name which he was only too anxious to have fully investigated by a judicial officer—namely, the Chief Judge of the Native Land Court, an officer of whose Court he was.

Mr. SEDDON said he regretted very much that the time of the House should be practically wasted over this question; because it was a waste of time, for he did not see the necessity for the remarks that had been made. In his opinion, in both cases the groundwork was not sufficient to merit what had been stated. As regarded the question of the unemployed at Hikurangi, the Government had sent an officer there to inquire into the condition of the workmen, and the report was that there were men there who had been working for a considerable time on Government works—some of them for two or three years. Some of them had been making 10s. and 12s. a day, and it was not a very hard case if they should be out of employment for a time. In fact, many of them were settlers in the district. They had done very well indeed, and the returns from that part of the district would prove it. All that was stated in the report was, there were some ten men whose necessities demanded that they should receive employment, and the instructions of the Government were to give these ten men that employment. After these ten men were provided for, he said the work was open to all New Zealand and to men in any part of New Zealand.

Mr. THOMPSON asked from whom the honourable gentleman had got this report.

Mr. SEDDON said it was from an officer in the district who was sent there to specially inquire. The necessities of these men in Christchurch, as compared with the settlers who had been doing co-operative work in the Hikurangi district, and who had had two or three years' work at very good wages, were very great indeed. In fact, the wages these residents in the district were at one time receiving were so high that he had reduced the rates. Whether it was owing to the easy means of getting the material or to other causes, the rates of wages were very high, and it was

this select number of men who had been kept there at work for a very long period making very good money, who were now agitating and making all this noise because a few men were sent from Christchurch to these works. He had had certain communications from storekeepers and business people there, and honourable members could understand that they were naturally anxious that this work should be given to the people who were on the works previously. But it never was intended that the men taken on co-operative works should be kept on them for all time, and that was evidently what was claimed by these men and their friends. They thought that because they had been on the works before they should get further work; but that was never intended, and it would be a very unwise thing to accede to. The settlers there had done very well for two or three years past, making more than wages, and he could not see why men who were absolutely starving, and whose wives and children had nothing to eat, should not be placed on that work. The Government felt warranted in this case in doing what they had done. There was this advantage: They would get new men into that part of the colony, and an infusion of new blood into that district might do a great deal of good. The possibility was that these men would never trouble the Government again, and would never wish to go back to Christchurch again. They would find things so satisfactory and the people so well off in the Whangarei district that those attractions, coupled with the beautiful climate there and the kind-hearted people who lived there, would induce them to make up their minds never to go back to Canterbury; and he was really surprised that the honourable gentleman should object to this infusion of new blood.

Mr. THOMPSON did not object.

Mr. SEDDON wished, then, to know what it was the honourable gentleman was complaining about.

Mr. THOMPSON objected to men being brought from other parts of the colony into a district where there were people in want of employment.

Mr. SEDDON had explained why this had been done. He had stated that it was because the necessities of the men at Christchurch were greater than those of the men in the country. He did not know whether his officers had misinformed him or not, but on the application to give work to distressed gum-diggers the officers reported that there were no distressed gum-diggers, but that, on the contrary, some who had been offered work would not take it. At the same time, the officer recommended that a number of the men who had been employed previously on the co-operative works should be taken on again. This recommendation he had refused to act upon. He thought he might now leave the subject. He was sorry there should be any feeling in the matter. The Minister of Labour had been doing his best with a most difficult question, and every member must admit that. The Labour Bureau was doing good work; and, in a matter of this kind, had

the honourable gentleman asked him or the Minister of Labour to let him see the reports so as to learn what the true position of affairs was, he questioned very much whether the honourable gentleman would have made the speech he had made that afternoon, because, as he (Mr. Seddon) said, it was quite unwarranted. Now he came to the question raised by the honourable member for Egmont. He admitted what the honourable gentleman had said as regarded Major Brown—that there was a time when he did good service to the colony; but there was also a time when matters in connection with him were severely questioned, and he really thought, in this case, Major Brown might say, "Save me from my friends!" The Government had no desire to do anything further. Action had been taken on the case as reported, and he had every confidence that Judge Kettle would not have made the comments he did unless there was good cause shown. For these reasons the Government had removed Major Brown's name from the list of Justices of the Peace and the position of Native interpreter. If he was dissatisfied in any way, why did he not, at an earlier period of the session, petition the House? Parliament was open to any of Her Majesty's subjects in New Zealand.

An Hon. MEMBER.—Has he not petitioned the House?

Mr. SEDDON did not think he had. He simply asked, therefore, why did not that gentleman come there with his grievance?

Mr. McGUIRE wished to ask if the honourable member for New Plymouth, in the earlier part of the session, did not present a petition from Major Brown.

Mr. E. M. SMITH said he had not presented a petition to the House. He had received pamphlets, issued by Major Brown or his friends, but they were not sent to him—he only got them from members who had them sent to them. He had also seen petitions in the pigeonholes of honourable gentlemen, and his attention had been drawn to them; and he understood a petition was before the Legislative Council from Major Brown; but he had not been asked to present a petition, nor had he any knowledge of a petition being presented to the House. He asked the question so as to put himself right on the Brown question.

Mr. McGUIRE.—In the earlier part of the session did you bring up the question?

Mr. E. M. SMITH said he had brought it up two or three times.

Mr. SEDDON thought he was correct in saying that the question was brought up by the honourable member for New Plymouth in the earlier part of the session, and he gave that honourable gentleman the same reply that he had given that day to the honourable member for Egmont. And, as he had said before, if Major Brown had a grievance, why did he not present a petition to the House? Why should the Government be blamed for having received and acted on the report of the case that was tried before Judge Kettle, when the evidence that came before that Judge warranted the

course that had been followed? If Major Brown felt aggrieved at that decision, the House and Parliament were open to him. He had not thought fit to take advantage of that opportunity. Then, why should the Government set up a special inquiry as to whether or not the Government were justified in taking his name off the list of Justices of the Peace or off the list of licensed interpreters? Why, then, blame the Government for the course that had been taken?

Mr. McGUIRE said the honourable gentleman had not stated the case correctly.

Mr. SEDDON desired to say the question was this: The Government had dealt with the facts of the case, and had put the facts before the House. Whether those facts were against the honourable member or against the gentleman named it was not for him to say. The Government did what they considered to be right, and they were not prepared to give this gentleman a special inquiry under the circumstances. With the report of the case that came before Judge Kettle and which had been submitted to the Government, and with the information that was in the possession of the Government, there was nothing else for the Government to do than what they had done. They had no other course open to them, and they did the same thing in that case as they would have done in any other case. They had simply done what was right. There was no alternative. If, because a person was struck off the list of Justices of the Peace or struck off from being an interpreter, he was to call upon the Government to grant him a specific inquiry, he (Mr. Seddon) simply said the thing would be nonsensical, and should not have been claimed or asked for, more particularly as there was the opportunity for any aggrieved person to bring his grievance before the House. He said advisedly—and this was probably the reason there had been no petition presented—that it was as well to let things rest. The Government had done nothing more than they were entitled, and, in fact, compelled, to do, with the information before them. If they had not done it, probably some one might have asked a question why in one instance they had done so—and so—and why in another case they had done something different. He admitted that Major Brown was a man who at one time had rendered good service to the colony, and nothing was more painful to himself and to his colleagues than to be compelled to do what they did. If he was not satisfied with what had been done there was the alternative that he (Mr. Seddon) had indicated. They could not give him a special inquiry, and the honourable gentleman himself would see why they could not do it.

Mr. MASSEY would take this opportunity of correcting a statement which was made by the honourable member for Dunedin City (Mr. Earnshaw). He was sorry to see the honourable gentleman had gone out. But this statement was indorsed by the Premier when he said that because the people north of Auckland

Mr. Seddon

had never raised the cry of want of employment therefore there was no real distress in that district. Those honourable gentlemen knew nothing of the circumstances of the people north of Auckland, and therefore their opinions as to that were of very little value; but he could tell them there were some thousands of men in that district who were altogether dependent upon the gum industry, and that during the last twelve months the price of gum had fallen from £2 14s. a hundredweight, until now it was down to £1 4s. and £1 6s. a hundredweight. And he could tell them a little more about the position there. There were people in the district north of Auckland who were working longer hours, and earning less money, and living in poorer circumstances than any other people in the colony. Instead of making 10s. or 12s. a day as stated by the Premier, there were hundreds of people there who were not earning 10s. or 12s. a week. He agreed with the honourable member for Marsden and the honourable member for the Bay of Islands that it was unfair, in view of the distressed condition of these people through want of remunerative work, that men should be sent from the other end of the colony to compete with them for any work that offered. He did not wish to say anything harsh against the Labour Bureau; he believed that in the past it had done very good work; and he hoped, after the expression of opinion they had had that afternoon, instances of this sort would not occur again, and that the unemployed in Christchurch would be found work in their own district, or, if not there, they might be sent to the district of the honourable member for New Plymouth, who evidently was so anxious to receive them. He hoped, at all events, they would not be sent to compete with the people of Auckland, who were quite as badly off as themselves.

Sir R. STOUT would not have risen if it had not been for the references to Major Brown's case. He exceedingly regretted that the Government had not consented to allow the Native Land Court to investigate whether Major Brown was a proper officer for interpreting Maori documents or not. He thought he ought not to be deprived of that position, and he did not know why this opportunity should not have been given him to be tried by the Chief Judge of the Court—whether it was right he should lose his position or not. He did not think Major Brown had been fairly treated at all, and, as to petitioning Parliament, he understood there was a petition in another place. As to petitioning the House, if the reports of the Petitions Committee were always to be accepted, then, no doubt, he might have petitioned the House and have succeeded; but they knew that sometimes the reports were treated as mere waste paper if they did not agree with the views expressed by the Government; and, further than that, unfortunately, in their Committees there was always introduced political colour; and what chance would a man have of fighting against the Government if the Go-

vernment had a majority on the Committee? Party feeling ran so high that if the party whip were raised there would be no chance of the man getting justice at all. What was fairer than saying, "Here is a man who has occupied a good position in the colony, and has rendered great services. What does he ask? He simply asks that, whether he has done right or done wrong, his case should be investigated by a judicial officer of the Government?"

4.0. Could anything be fairer than that? Was that an unfair request to ask?

Surely a man was not, at seventy years of age, to be deprived of his living without having a Judge of the Native Land Court to say whether he had been guilty of any malpractice or not. He could not see that there was any objection to allowing a Judge to investigate the case, and he could not understand why it was necessary to ask permission of the House first. He did hope that the Premier would see that it was only a fair thing to the man to allow the inquiry he asked, and it would be no loss of dignity on the part of the Government to allow a judicial investigation. As to the "unemployed" question, he knew nothing whatever of the merits of the question raised by the honourable member for Marsden, but there was one remark made by the Premier which he considered somewhat unfortunate, and that was that the co-operative works were now to be looked upon as works to be carried on not for the public advantage, but simply as relief-works.

Mr. SEDDON.—Certainly not.

Sir R. STOUT.—That was the position the honourable gentleman took up. He (Sir R. Stout) understood co-operation to be this: it was to be a new mode of getting our public works done, and it was not to be used merely for relief for poor people; and they had no right to treat men as paupers because they had to do co-operative work for the Government. The attitude the honourable gentleman took up was entirely the opposite. He said it was not right to allow a man, after he had been working so many years for the Government, to remain at that work.

Mr. SEDDON.—Nothing of the kind.

Sir R. STOUT said what the honourable gentleman said was that when a man had been so many years on the Kamo-Hikurangi works he thought it was time that he should go and let some one else have a turn, and that the men who had been employed previously should not get a turn again. That was the attitude he took up, and that was entirely altering the whole system understood to be in force in the colony in regard to the co-operative works. The co-operative works were simply intended to be a means of getting Government work done in a new way, and were not intended as relief-works at all. All that was to be changed, it seemed, that was all he wished to say on the question.

Mr. COLLINS felt that the bitter and uncalled-for attack made on the Minister of Labour by the honourable member for Marsden called for some reply, particularly from one who represented the locality which was brought

so prominently into this debate. He thought the honourable gentleman scarcely grappled with or comprehended the real difficulties there were in dealing with the "unemployed" question, and, instead of making a question of this kind a peg upon which to hang an attack on the Labour Department, he thought the difficulties attaching to that department really called for sympathy and consideration from every member of the House. He would just like to point out that Canterbury had been particularly unfortunate in the matter of the unemployed. In the first place, it was a large agricultural district, and they all knew how severely agriculture had been depressed for the last few years. Quite a number of those who had been in the habit of maintaining themselves in the country were forced into the City of Christchurch, where the Labour Bureau had been established. He was quite convinced of this: that if the honourable gentleman knew the difficulties which beset the administration of that Bureau in Christchurch he would never have made the attack he had made that afternoon. If the honourable gentleman would only spend a few weeks in Christchurch his mind would undergo a complete change with regard to this matter. One could scarcely repress one's feelings on this subject when one considered the immense amount of suffering entailed on those who had been driven into the city in consequence of their inability to maintain themselves. Men with families dependent on them desiring work were in this position. They were not loafers, such as the honourable gentleman would lead the House to believe; and that they were not loafers was proved by the fact that the men who had been sent from Christchurch from time to time to the Forty-mile Bush, and into the Taranaki District, had become respectable, hard-working, and good settlers, and were acknowledged as such by all who came in contact with them. They did not belong to the idle class, but to those who had to go to Government and ask to be placed in the way of finding employment for themselves. He thought the honourable gentleman, instead of making an attack of this kind upon the administration of this department, ought to have been extremely careful before doing so. Since in Canterbury they had no lands to which the unemployed could be sent,—with the exception, of course, of the Cheviot Estate,—he thought they were entitled, as taxpayers, to say that their people should have access to the lands in the North Island. He regretted the tone adopted by the honourable gentleman, as it seemed to be an endeavour to set one district against another, and to give rise to parochial feelings of the very basest character. He did hope that the time was very far distant when the different districts of the colony would foster bitter feelings of animosity such as were made manifest in the speech of the honourable gentleman that afternoon.

Mr. HOGG wished to say a word in reply to the remarks of the honourable member for Wellington City (Sir R. Stout) in reference to

the case of Major Brown. That honourable gentleman said it was useless for a man in the position of Major Brown, having a grievance against the Government, to expect to receive fair treatment at the hands of the Committees of the House, because on those Committees the Government had a majority. Well, he thought that was rather an uncalled-for attack, coming from an experienced member of this House, on the tribunals that had been set up by the House. If what the honourable gentleman said was the case, then those Committees would be absolutely useless—they would not be able to perform their functions. For what purpose were these Committees created? They had Petitions Committees, Waste Lands Committees, and Committees of various other characters; and the bulk of the work those Committees had to do was to ascertain the grievances of people who came before them. If it were true that the Committees which were set up, because they happened to be composed of a majority of Government supporters, were on that account unable to do their work impartially and thoroughly, then it would be useless for any petitioner to come before them. But he maintained that the Committees, whether the majority belonged to one side of the House or the other, were expected to do their duty honestly and fearlessly, without respect to either political creed or any other circumstances beyond the claims of those who submitted their cases to them for adjudication. He did not think that the Government were called upon to hold a judicial investigation into every complaint that was made against the Administration. If the Government were to attempt to do anything of the kind, then there would be very little else for the Government of the country to look after. It was very well known that there were grievances constantly all over the country, and there were individuals who were never satisfied. As far as he could ascertain, Major Brown had had his case dealt with by one of the most eminent District Judges they had in the colony, and the Government, in dealing with the matter in the way they had done, had simply adopted the report of that gentleman. Coming now to the question with which he was somewhat conversant—that was, the labour question: Within the last year or two he had had complaints from people in the district he represented of a similar nature to those complaints referred to by the honourable member for Marsden. He had received letters from settlers in the Forty-mile Bush complaining that men had been sent up there by the Labour Department from Canterbury, notwithstanding the fact that many of the residents there had been for a considerable time out of employment. He had received those complaints ever since he became a representative, and, although he was not astonished that such complaints had really been made, still he must admit that if they were investigated it would be found that a great deal could be said in favour of the process adopted. The scope of the Labour De-

Mr. Hogg

partment, in his opinion, was this: It was a distributing agency for giving relief where the labour-market was in the most congested condition, and it was generally in the most populous centres where there was a large amount of distress and severe privation. That being the case, he could not for a moment blame either the Minister or the officers of the department if they found it necessary occasionally to send men from Christchurch, Dunedin, Wellington, and Auckland into the district he represented with a view of relieving those centres, because the places where there was the greatest pressure should be the first to receive relief. What the Premier had said was quite right, that the men who had been a considerable time on the public works should not consider that they had a vested interest in those works and must never be removed from them. When they had had an opportunity of making some provision for the future it was time that persons in worse circumstances should be given a chance. Then, the honourable member for Wellington City (Sir R. Stout) stated that those works should not be considered to be relief-works. But he (Mr. Hogg) maintained that every kind of employment of labour gave relief to the labour-market. He would go a little further and say that every man who gave a brief to a member of the learned profession relieved the necessity of that gentleman. There was no getting away from the fact. That did not, of course, detract from the nobility of labour; it did not demoralise labour; but, if there was work available, he thought it was the duty of the State to relieve the necessities of men out of employment, and pay them in return for the services rendered. Now, with regard to the Christchurch settlers, he could speak from his own experience. They had had some settlers no doubt in very bad circumstances who had been sent to the Forty-mile Bush, and placed on railway and other works there—men sent from Akaroa and other places in Canterbury. And what position were they in now? In some cases they had joined special-settlement associations, and in other cases they had taken up sections for themselves; and some of the best and most thrifty settlers in that part of the country were those who hailed from Canterbury. They had made comfortable homes for themselves, and had brought their wives and families up to them, and were now doing well. They had started a dairy factory also, which was a great help to them. No doubt there was some feeling of soreness on the part of some of the workmen because the residents in that district did not get the preference; but it was now admitted generally that the men from Canterbury had proved themselves not only excellent workers for themselves and their families, but splendid settlers for that part of the colony. A few years ago, before this department was started, when any new railway-works or road-works were undertaken by private contractors, they had no complaints about men being taken from Auckland, Wellington, Christchurch, or other places. But

what did the contractors do? They did not simply bring their men, but their horses, trucks, and implements were taken from one district to another. There were no complaints then on the part of working-men in these localities. They did not ask why these men were brought along with the contractors, though the men were brought in swarms from place to place like an army of locusts, and were not distributed fairly and equitably as the Labour Department endeavoured to distribute men, but were brought in droves to the public works to earn the money that was paid by the whole colony, in the face of crowds of working-men out of employment. The working-men then did not complain, because they had not to deal with the Government—which could be set up like an “Aunt Sally” for everybody to shy at—but with contractors,—with private individuals. They never heard working-men complain when they had to deal with private individuals, but they did complain now, when they had a Labour Department honestly discharging its duties. He might say that, of his own knowledge, the Labour Department had been doing its utmost for the working-classes. The Labour Department did its utmost to furnish relief, and he thought that was the opinion of every member of the House. He could understand the position of the Minister of Labour was something like that of the old woman who lived in a shoe, and had so many children she did not know what to do. It was impossible for him to find work for everybody who was clamouring for it, but what he did do was to deal with the most necessitous cases. It might seem very hard to single men that they did not enjoy a preference; but, while there were women and children to be supported, where there was severe distress, the married men ought to have the preference. To give that preference was only acting according to the common instincts of humanity. Then, again, when roads had to be made at the expense, to a certain extent, of the settlers of the country districts where settlement was going on, if possible the new settlers, most of whom were married men, ought to have the preference as regarded work, as it would be the means of enabling them to attach themselves to the land by helping them over their early difficulties. He found that the Labour Department had almost invariably exercised a very sound discretion. It was true that now and again they had sent married men from different districts to these works; but, as a rule, whenever attention was called to the fact that the settlers were anxious to obtain road-work, and that it would be the means of helping them in connection with bushfelling and clearing operations if they received employment from the Government, he had found that the Labour Department was only too glad to respond to the request and, if possible, to find labour for men of that description. In this way the Labour Department had materially helped to advance settlement. Viewing the whole subject from a broad standpoint, he must say that the Labour Department in various ways had done more to assist

the labouring-classes in New Zealand than any other department that had ever been established by any Government. They had given relief where relief was necessary, and, although a certain amount of stagnation was felt, and there was a good deal of want of employment in various parts of the colony, he maintained that that was the result of a great wave of depression, and was not nearly so great as it would be if that department were not in existence.

Captain RUSSELL said that, fortunately, in the district in which he resided, the iniquitous district where the properties were large ones, there was very little trouble in connection with the unemployed, and therefore he did not propose to refer to that question. It was true they had a number of swaggers whom honourable gentlemen had sent there, but they looked after their own swaggers, and did not pester Parliament about them. He did not go into the question of the unemployed for that reason, except to draw an illustration of how little, apparently, there was known of the administration of the department. The honourable member for Marsden had said that these men were vastly underpaid, and the Premier had said that they were earning more than wages.

Mr. THOMPSON said the statement of the Premier applied to the men who had constructed the line, not to the men now employed.

Captain RUSSELL was only drawing attention to the fact that the Premier said that the men were earning more than wages, and he thought the Minister in charge of the department ought to post the Premier up better than to allow him to make such a statement as that the men were earning more than wages. He had, however, risen for the purpose of saying a word or two with regard to the impression conveyed to his mind about the treatment of Major Brown. He had never met that gentleman, so that, individually, he knew nothing about him; but as it had been presented to them that day the position seemed to be a peculiar one. They had been told that he had been four times elected a member of the House, that he had been twice Superintendent of a province in New Zealand, that he had been a Cabinet Minister, and that, in addition to that, he was selected to act as a Civil Commissioner for the district, and had been subsequently appointed to the position of General Government Agent, and that, in addition, he, in military capacities, had given good service to the people of the colony. All these assertions, in all probability, were true, and, if so, they pointed to the fact that Major Brown must have been a man of more than ordinary character; and yet they were invited to suppose that when he came to the age of seventy years his conduct was such that, without inquiry, his name was to be struck off the list of Justices of the Peace, and his license to act as Native interpreter taken away, without his being allowed to appear in his own defence.

An Hon. MEMBER.—There was an inquiry.

Captain RUSSELL said of course he could not pretend to speak, as Ministers did, with authority on the subject, but he was informed that such had not been the case—that, though there was an inquiry held before Judge Kettle, it was not into the circumstances of Major Brown's case, but that that inquiry was an inquiry into another gentleman's conduct, and that anything affecting Major Brown was only incidental to that inquiry, which was not in reality an inquiry into Major Brown's conduct. He could not say absolutely that that was so, but so he was informed. If that was the case, it did seem strange that a man who during a quarter of a century had been a remarkable man in the colony should be dishonoured without being allowed an inquiry. They had been told by the Premier that there was the alternative of an appeal to a Committee of the House. It was not becoming any member of the House to decry the Committees of the House, and he was not about to do so; but would any one of them choose that their personal honour should be inquired into by a parliamentary Committee? Certainly not. With all respect to parliamentary Committees, how were the proceedings of parliamentary Committees conducted? They all knew that the sittings of the House might be prolonged to seven o'clock in the morning, and some members would be too sleepy and others too tired to attend to the business of the Committee; whilst one or two energetic men, who had distinct opinions upon a point, hurried up to attend the meeting, and they, after the meeting had gone on for a certain time, went away from the Committee and others took their places, and others came later on. The evidence was heard in a fragmentary and desultory way. Some of it was taken by shorthand reporters and some was not. Some honourable members heard the beginning of the evidence, some heard the middle, and some heard the end, and some heard none of it at all. Were any persons to be invited to submit questions affecting their personal honour to a tribunal such as that? Certainly it was the last tribunal one would wish to have. But, assuming for an instant that this Major Brown had done something which he ought not to have done, surely it was desirable, in the interests of the colony as much as in this man's own interests, that there should be a full, fair, and open inquiry. It was not his desire that Major Brown should be sheltered. If he had done anything inconsistent with his former character or the position he had held by all means let him suffer for so doing; but the Parliament of the country, it seemed to him, ought not to refuse an inquiry—which he was informed had not been granted to this gentleman—in order that he might be enabled to prove to the world that he was as guiltless as he claimed to be. The petition had been put in their pigeonholes at the beginning of the session; he had read it at the time, but the details he could not profess to remember, but he fancied Major Brown denied altogether the truth of the allegations made against him. Of course, it was impossible for a man de-

scribed as this man had been described, with one foot in the grave, to appeal to the law-courts of the colony, nor yet, he being penniless, could he fight the strength of the Government. There was another point he would like to touch on, and that was that two or three honourable members, in speaking, had said that the replies given to the questions they had on the Order Paper were unsatisfactory. The answer to the question he had put was eminently unsatisfactory, though he was bound to admit that it was extremely specific. He wanted to find out when they would have the Public Works Statement, and the information he got was that they were not to have it delivered until the very last moment of the session. Of course, the answer was not given in those precise words, but that was the meaning. They were told that they should know nothing of the policy of the Government until the financial Bills had been dealt with, as until then it was impossible to bring down the Public Works Statement. Surely they were in a most anomalous position, when they were approaching the end of the session, and yet had not got one of the financial policy Bills read a second time in that House.

Mr. J. McKENZIE.—We shall be here a month.

Captain RUSSELL hoped they would be here considerably more than a month. They had more than a month's work to do. If they took one Bill a day they would be doing their work pretty rapidly, and there were seventy-four pieces of business before the House. If they attempted to do their work properly they could not possibly do it within a month. He could not believe it was going to be done properly. They all knew they were not going to remain much more than a month—the Government could not keep their supporters—and the policy Bills were being kept back, so that they might be forced through a wearied and tired House during the last moments of the session, and after they had become so weary that they could not deal properly with the financial policy Bills. The Government would have the Public Works Statement brought down, and would invite them, during the last moments of the session, to discuss what was really one of the principal features of the business of the session. He protested against such a course of business as that. Honourable members who were in the last Parliament might possibly remember what had occurred then. Not until within fourteen days of the prorogation of Parliament were they given an opportunity of knowing the public-works policy of the Government; and then how were they allowed to deal with it? They were forced to do it during an all-night sitting. During the early part of the day other business had been before the House, and, if he remembered aright, the Public Works Statement was brought on late for discussion on the motion for going into

4.30. Supply, and there they were condemned to sit in that Chamber until they had discussed the Public Works Statement and had got into the public-works esti-

mates in a single night. They were kept there till daylight. The whole public-works policy, and the whole expenditure on public works, was put before the House at such a time that members were so worn out that they could not possibly properly do the business. The year before they had a somewhat similar proceeding—not quite so severe or drastic, but they were compelled to do the business at an hour when they were unable properly to do it. They were to be driven to the same course this session. He understood from the Premier's remarks that they were not to have the Public Works Statement until they had finished the whole of the financial policy Bills. That would not be done until one week, at any rate, of the end of the session, and then they would have the question of the expenditure of the public-works money brought on: and it must be remembered that it was not loan-money, but taxation ground from people who could ill afford to pay it, that formed now a considerable portion of our public-works expenditure. Under those circumstances, he maintained that they were behaving improperly to the taxpayers of the colony in having an important public document brought down when members were all wearied out, and even then they were given too short a time to examine it thoroughly. In all probability they would be compelled to sit up all night and vote money just as the Government chose. He hoped honourable members would protest against so flagrant a wrong as that being done.

Mr. STEVENS said it had occurred to him during the earlier part of the session that he would take part in no debate whatever in which he could not give some assistance to the House. On the present occasion, however, he must deprecate the unnecessary waste of time which had taken place. The honourable gentleman who moved the adjournment did so for the express purpose of being able to tell his constituents what he had done with reference to the unemployed who had been sent to his district from another place. If he (Mr. Stevens) were to bring before the House every grievance or complaint made to him from those working on co-operative works in his district a great deal of the time of the House would be taken up in dealing with those questions. There were far more of these men working in his district than in that of the honourable member for Marsden, but, instead of wasting the time of the House by bringing their questions and grievances before the House, where no practical redress could be obtained, he went direct to the department, or the Minister, and stated the cases. That, he thought, was the proper way to deal with such cases. With respect to persons having been brought from other districts, they looked on every man who came to their district, and who was willing and able to work, as a great benefit and an acquisition. These people were placed upon land, in many instances, whereas those who had been in the locality were not offered work until they asked for it. If the honourable member would welcome those persons and say, "Yes; come, and

we will give you land, or we will give you work, or treat you all as one," that would be what he called representing the working-men of the colony, and not representing fifty or sixty or forty working-men in one particular locality. He hoped the honourable gentleman would look at the subject in the same way as he did, and that was, that they should do what was right for all the workers of the colony, and not for the workers of any particular locality. With reference to Major Brown, he was quite sure there were a great many honourable members who considered that Major Brown had been treated unfairly and unjustly; but the reply given by the Premier did not astonish him (Mr. Stevens) in the slightest degree, because he was placed in a similar position to Major Brown some twenty years ago; though, instead of his license being cancelled, it was suspended, and the first intimation which he received from the Government was something like a month after the suspension of his license, and he first heard of it through the public Press. He wrote to the Government an explanation as to his conduct, and he might say that he was charged with having dealt with land for which the Government were negotiating: hence the reason for the suspension of his license. He wrote to the Government of the day, he interviewed them, and did everything he possibly could in order to have the suspension rescinded, but without avail. He asked them to set up a tribunal or appoint a Judge of the Native Land Court, as had been suggested in this case, to deal with it; but he was denied that, and he had to wait seven long months until the House met. He had to bring the question before the House before he got any redress. Therefore he thought Major Brown had not been treated in an exceptional way, for there was the precedent he had mentioned. He was speaking of the days when Sir Donald McLean was Native Minister. That was the treatment meted out to him. Therefore Major Brown's was not an exceptional case. It was his belief that if Major Brown were to bring his case by petition before the House the House would be the proper tribunal to try it. He quite agreed with what the honourable member for Hawke's Bay had said—that the case had not yet been tried. During the trial of another case evidence came out which, in the opinion of the Judge, warranted him in reporting as he had done. The Judge might be right, so far as he (Mr. Stevens) knew, for he could say nothing as to the merits of the case, but he quite agreed with the honourable member for Hawke's Bay that there had not been a specific trial at which Major Brown had had an opportunity of showing that his license should not be cancelled. If it were not for the precedent which he had referred to he also would consider that Major Brown was suffering great hardship. There was, however, this great difference between the action of the present Government and the action of the Government of Sir Donald McLean—namely, instead of cancelling the license, in his case they merely suspended it. He thought,

until there had been some specific inquiry with respect to any charge made against any officer, cancellation of his commission or certificate should not take place. He thought if Major Brown were now to petition the House—and there was quite time for him to do so—he might get some redress. The honourable member for Wellington City (Sir R. Stout) had said that you could not hope to get justice from Committees, because there were on Committees members who were of different political opinions. He, however, had found from his experience that, where it came to be a personal question as between members of a Committee and a petitioner, the members of the Committee threw off the cloak of party colour altogether and treated the question on its merits. He was very sorry indeed to hear the statement which the honourable member for Wellington City had made. That statement would go forth to the world and would lead people to think that this Parliament was not to be trusted; that the honour of a petitioner could not with safety be left in its hands. He would strongly advise those who were interested in Major Brown's case to at once petition the House for the purpose of obtaining the redress to which, he thought, Major Brown was entitled. The redress to which he was entitled was an impartial inquiry, and he could not get that better than in that House. He had known Major Brown for some twenty-five years, and he had always heard him spoken well of, and as a good and efficient officer. As to the circumstances of the case he knew nothing, and therefore would not express an opinion upon it.

Mr. O'REGAN recollected that at an earlier part of the session he, in common with other honourable members, received copies of this gentleman's petition. It then appeared to him that Major Brown had been treated in rather a harsh manner. He knew nothing about the *pros* and *cons* of the case, but it seemed, on the face of it, to deserve inquiry. It was very hard indeed that Major Brown should, in his old age, be deprived of the means of earning his bread. No honourable member could deny that Major Brown, or any other man, was entitled to the fullest inquiry in a case like the present. Therefore he hoped Major Brown would be given an opportunity to vindicate himself.

Mr. PIRANI would like to say a word in praise of the administration of the Labour Bureau. He could say this, with considerable experience as to the manner in which it was managed: that it was one of the best-managed departments of the public service. The only fault with regard to it was that all the men engaged on the public works of the colony were not engaged through the Bureau. If that were done, he was sure there would be far more satisfaction than existed with the present somewhat haphazard system of some departments engaging their own men. If, coupled with that, larger facilities were given to men engaged on those public works to settle on the land—if they were given land in the vicinity of

the work they were engaged on—much benefit would result to these men and their families. He was aware that was done to some extent at the present time, but it was not done sufficiently. It had not been done frequently enough to enable the men to get the full benefit of the work they were obtaining in the country. In regard to Major Brown's case, he would like to say that he also thought the Government should have a proper inquiry made into the matter. He was fully aware that Judge Kettle, during his commission on the Kaitangi-whenua case, considered this case; but he did not give Major Brown an opportunity of rebutting anything that was brought against him in the same manner that he would have done if he had been making an inquiry into Major Brown's own supposed delinquency. He trusted the Government would reconsider the matter, and give the official in question a fair opportunity of defending his character from any aspersions cast on it, or of explaining any matter that had been complained of.

Mr. TANNER wished to enter a word of protest against the exclusive policy that appeared to find favour with the honourable member for Marsden, who had moved the adjournment and led to the waste of time that afternoon. He considered the spirit in which his complaint had been expressed and couched constituted a revelation of the most miserable and narrow provincialism which the colony had ever witnessed. What were the facts of the case—just the bare outline of the case that had led to the honourable gentleman's complaint? The circumstances of the working and industrial people of Canterbury were exceptional in the colony. There were no Crown lands in that province for settlement; there was no bush-clearing, which provided work for such a multitude of men in other districts; there was no Native land that could be acquired by the Crown, and on which labour might be profitably employed in roading; the mining industry could scarcely be said to exist in that province. The honourable gentleman had spoken in previous sessions in a way which showed that his vote would always be given against any attempt to encourage the manufacturing operations of the colony to any further extent by tariff revision, and manufactures and agriculture—especially the latter—were the only avenues of employment left open to the labouring people in Canterbury. Added to this, the failure of the harvest had caused a cessation of employment of a most grievous character, and had led to a congestion in Christchurch seldom equalled. Under those circumstances, men had applied to the Government for some assistance in the nature of work, and the Labour Bureau had for years adopted the laudable policy of transferring men from districts where no work was procurable to districts where work was to be found. Indeed, if he knew anything of the Labour Bureau, that had been the original intention of the Minister in first instituting it. No doubt many men would prefer to remain in Canterbury, and would like to find work in their own immediate vicinity, for which no

Mr. Stevens

blame could be attached to the men; but they were not always able to provide employment of a remunerative character in the neighbourhood of a large town. He would go back to a past volume of *Hansard* and see what was the method proposed by the honourable member for Marsden himself. It was rather interesting sometimes, when complaints of this kind were made, to go back to an honourable member's past speeches, and put them in contrast with speeches like the one they had just heard. On reference to Volume 71, page 493, it would be seen that the honourable gentleman said,—

"I hold that it is the duty of the Government to encourage settlement on the waste lands of the Crown in every way they can, and that it is not their duty to encourage people to congregate about the cities. . . . The more people are induced to leave the cities and to go into the country the better will it be for themselves and for those who remain in the cities."

What did the honourable gentleman mean by then advocating that they should be transferred to the country, and now furiously denouncing the department which had forwarded a few men to a northern district? He apparently did not mean, in the speech quoted from, that the unemployed should be sent to his part of the country. That was shown by the speech he had made that afternoon. Having put that statement on record alongside those made by the honourable gentleman that afternoon, he (Mr. Tanner) would leave the electors of the colony to judge for themselves, without making any comment of his own.

Mr. R. McKENZIE knew little or nothing about the case of Major Brown further than having seen the petition he had circulated. With reference to the remarks of the senior member for Wellington City, he might say that he (Mr. McKenzie) had had some little experience of Committees of the House before he came to the House. That experience had always been that the honourable gentlemen on those Committees invariably investigated every matter in a fair, painstaking, careful, and impartial manner. In fact, he had always found that any one who came before a Committee of the House with a just or fair claim had justice done to him. With reference to the question that the adjournment of the House was moved on, it was a matter he knew something about. He had been amongst working-people for some twenty-four or twenty-five years, and also had been a considerable employer of labour, and he was somewhat surprised at the statements made by the honourable member for Marsden on the question. Of course, Nature did not make all men alike, and some earned more wages than others, especially on piecework. He was not going to say the co-operative system of contracting at present in vogue in the colony was the best that could be devised for the construction of public works: his own opinion was that it was not. He believed that both the colony and working-people would be benefited from a minimum-rate-of-wages system being fixed on all contracts; and it would be better

if small contracts were let with small deposits, so that any half-dozen working-men could tender for them with a minimum rate of wages. However, that was a matter for the Government to consider. He had no fault to find with their management, and he recognised that the department managed by the Minister of Labour was a very difficult one indeed to manage. There was no doubt the honourable gentleman at the head of that department would get more kicks than halfpence from the dissatisfied unemployed, and there was also no doubt he got abused when he should not be abused; but, with his usual good-nature, he put up with a lot of that nonsense—for he could call it nothing else. The honourable member for Marsden was evidently not aware that the "unemployed" question had been a very severe one in the colony for many years. For the last ten or twelve years it had been one of the most important questions in the colony. As the honourable member for New Plymouth had put it, the west coast of the Middle Island had been a sort of dumping-ground for the unemployed of the Cities of Christchurch, Dunedin, and, he believed, Auckland, for the last ten years. But they never made any objections, and never found fault. They were always pleased, when there was work to be done, for people to go and do it, no matter where they came from. It was a mistake for honourable members to get up and say that any work in their particular districts should be kept for the people in those districts. To say that nobody was to come in from the outside was taking a very narrow, provincial view of the matter, and a view he would not like to maintain or support. He thought the Government generally, when they had work in any part of the colony, were justified, and were acting on sound principles, in sending men there from any other part of the colony where employment was at the time scarce. It very often happened that there might not be men in the district where there was work to do, and it became absolutely necessary that men should be sent from somewhere else. He did not see that the honourable member for Marsden had anything serious to complain of.

Mr. WILSON said he wanted to say a few words on another question, which was one of great importance—that was, the flax industry, which was alluded to in Question No. 7, which was on the subject of the bonus offered by the Government for improved machinery. He, however, did not wish to complain of the answer the Minister gave, as he knew that the matter was being considered by the three experts the Government had appointed to go over the different entries. He (Mr. Wilson) hoped something would evolve out of the entries that would cheapen the cost of production of hemp, but he was afraid nothing would come at present; he hoped he was mistaken. However, what he wanted to say was that, if this offer of the Government failed to bring anything to light that would benefit the industry, then he hoped the Minister would offer something substantial in the shape of a bonus

that would attract the inventive faculties of those outside New Zealand who might be said to be experts in invention. Why should the Minister not offer £10,000 as a bonus? The flax trade was practically at a standstill. If any process could be devised that would reduce the cost of production, say, £3 or £4, the whole trade would start into life again, and the "unemployed" question would be at an end. The whole trouble that so much had been made of to-day would be gone. On the West Coast alone a thousand men could be employed, and all the discontented constituents of the Minister of Labour could find plenty of work then.

Mr. REEVES.—I should not need to send any to the North of Auckland then.

Mr. WILSON.—No. There would be room for every one in the trade, not only of the Christchurch unemployed, but they could take those of whose removal to the North the honourable member for Marsden complained. He (Mr. Wilson) hoped therefore that the Minister would consider this question before the end of the session, and help the industry by an additional bonus if the present one failed. If it resulted in success it would be money well spent. If not, no money was needed.

Motion for adjournment negatived.

GOVERNMENT RAILWAYS BILL.

RECOMMITTED.

Clause 3.—Railways to be revested in Her Majesty the Queen.

Subsection (2).—"The appointments of the Commissioners shall be determined, but they severally shall receive appointments from the Governor as officers of the railway service of the colony, to date from the aforesaid day, for the residue of the terms of office for which they were respectively appointed as Commissioners aforesaid, and at the same rate of salary."

Mr. SEDDON moved, That all the words after "determined" be struck out, and the following words be inserted in lieu thereof: "Provided, however, that on the termination of their present engagements on the twenty-second day of October next the said Commissioners may be reappointed at their present rates of salary, but so that such appointments shall expire upon the commencement of this Act."

Motion agreed to.

Clause 6.—Leave of absence.

Major STEWARD moved to strike out the word "now," at the end of the proviso, with the view of substituting therefor "at the time of the passing of this Act."

Amendment negatived.

Clause 21.—Proclamations, &c., validated.

Sir MAURICE O'RORKE moved, That the following words be added to the clause: "and the Proclamation last named in the First Schedule is cancelled so far as regards the Onehunga town and borough endowments mentioned therein."

Words added.

Mr. SEDDON moved, That the following be added as a new clause:—

Mr. Wilson

"The Governor may, by Order in Council, from time to time make, alter, or repeal regulations not inconsistent with this Act—

- "(1.) For determining into what branches the railway service shall be divided, and for organizing and classifying the same;
- "(2.) For determining which of the employés in the railway service shall be permanent and which shall be temporary, and which of them shall be required to give security for the performance of their duties;
- "(3.) For prescribing the qualifications required of all candidates for permanent employment, and the ages at which they shall be admitted to each of the various branches of the railway service, and, if necessary, in each grade of such branches;
- "(4.) For determining the nature or character and extent of qualifications, examinations, or tests, according to the requirements of each of the higher grades in the railway service, which employés in the lower grades desiring to compete for and to be promoted to such higher grades shall possess or undergo;
- "(5.) For determining the rate of salaries, wages, or other allowances to be paid or made to the employés in the permanent employ of the Commissioners, and also in the case of temporary employments;
- "(6.) For regulating the relative rank, position, grade, or class in the duties and conduct of the employés in each of the various branches of the railway service; and for determining which of such grades shall be deemed the higher and lower grades respectively in such railway service;
- "(7.) For regulating the duties to be performed by employés in the several branches of the railway service, and the discipline to be observed in the performance of such duties, and arranging for the performance of duties during holidays;
- "(8.) For fixing the ages at which employés shall retire in the different branches of the railway service;
- "(9.) For affixing to breaches of such regulations, according to the nature of the offences, such penalties as by or under this Act are authorised."

Mr. G. W. RUSSELL moved, That the following words be added to the clause: "A list shall be prepared and laid before Parliament each year setting out the names, status, and salaries of each employé in the order of his rank."

Addition agreed to.

Mr. BUICK moved to add the following words:—

"Subject to the following conditions:—

"No person shall be appointed to the general-management class save as officers

are appointed to other clerical departments of the Civil Service.

"No person shall be appointed to the traffic or locomotive classes save as experts are appointed in other departments of the Government service, or as cadets.

"Cadets to the traffic or locomotive classes shall be nominated by members of the House of Representatives in alphabetical order. No member shall have the right to a second nomination until every other member has had an opportunity of nominating one cadet.

"No person shall be appointed to the traffic or locomotive classes unless he has passed the Sixth Standard of education, or its equivalent.

"No person shall be appointed to the maintenance class save on the nomination of the District Manager, and unless he has passed the Third Standard of education, or its equivalent."

The Committee divided on the question, "That the words proposed to be added be so added."

AYES, 16.

Allen	Massey	Stout
Button	McGuire	Te Ao.
Flatman	McKenzie, R.	
Green	McNab	<i>Tellers.</i>
Hall-Jones	O'Regan	Buick
Lang	Smith, G. J.	Earnshaw.

NOES, 43.

Bell	Mackenzie, T.	Russell, G. W.
Buchanan	Mackintosh	Russell, W. R.
Buddo	Maslin	Saunders
Carnell	McGowan	Seddon
Carroll	McKenzie, J.	Smith, E. M.
Collins	McLachlan	Stevens
Crowther	Meredith	Steward
Duncan	Millar	Tanner
Graham	Mills	Thompson
Hall	Mitchelson	Ward
Harris	Montgomery	Willis.
Houston	Newman	
Kelly, W.	Parata	<i>Tellers.</i>
Larnach	Pirani	Morrison
Lawry	Reeves	Pinkerton.

PAIRS.

<i>For.</i>	<i>Against.</i>
Duthie	Guinness
Fraser	Kelly, J. W.
Wilson.	Hogg.

Majority against, 27.

Addition negatived, and clause as amended agreed to.

Bill reported, with further amendments.

LICENSING BILL.

Mr. SEDDON.—Mr. Speaker, the long-looked-for has arrived at last. I desire to say, in moving the second reading of this Bill, that if it is not quite up to what I predicted, and what I told the House would eventuate—namely, that it would give satisfaction to every one—yet its having pleased no one augurs well for its being a very good Bill. It would be impossible to please the extremists on both sides—they will never be pleased. You will not please some of

these temperance reformers, who by their intemperance injure the temperance cause. But the Bill will, I think, give satisfaction to those who desire to see the liquor-traffic brought under control, and those who desire restriction and reform and are earnestly working for it. They have here, at all events, what they have asked for for very many years, and that is, an appeal to the people—to the men and women of New Zealand—so that they may give a vote upon this important question. Last session a Bill was introduced—the Direct Veto Bill—and I said at the time that the Bill was promoted by the extreme temperance party. Those who now object to having the appeal to the people on election-day were the parties who last session agitated for it, and who brought into the House in a concrete form a Bill containing the very same proposal which the Government now brings down—the same proposal which no doubt the House and the country will be told is unsatisfactory and should not be passed into law. The first question to be asked is this: Is there a necessity for the introduction this session of this Bill, and for dealing with the liquor question? I say there is a necessity. The Act we passed last session was in some respects experimental: in working, the details of it have proved defective. The defects are now well known to honourable members. The public mind is ripe for these defects being remedied. I say the proper time to do that is this session, if at all possible. Not only that, but I will say this: that the sooner we get this liquor question settled definitely the better it will be for members of the House and the better it will be for the country. So long as there is an uncertainty, either with the trade or with those who are agitating for reform—so long as there is an agitation going on—I say it is against other business, and we are trammelled to a great extent by it, and the sooner we get rid of this question for, at all events, this Parliament the better. If another Parliament is formed, and other members come here, let them deal with the question as it then presents itself. I think the better course to adopt now is the course which we are now following—namely, to get the Bill passed, to let a fair expression be given of the feeling of honourable members upon this question; to pass the measure; and having done with it, at all events, for this Parliament, then next session we shall have other matters to deal with, and we shall not be trammelled with this one. The Government desire this Bill should be passed, and passed, if possible, this session.

Mr. T. MACKENZIE.—Seriously?

Mr. SEDDON.—Yes; and I dare say in this matter those honourable members will find that out, as they did in connection with the granting of the women's franchise. Those honourable gentlemen always accuse the Government of not being serious, and I think on that occasion they scarcely believed it till the women of New Zealand were recording their votes, and then they began to find out that it was an accomplished fact, and it was

only when members came into this House that they gave the Government credit for being serious and having passed it into law. What is the position of members in respect of this measure? There are many members here who are pledged to reforms, and were the Government not to give them an opportunity of expressing an opinion, and voting in the direction in which they were pledged, they would naturally conclude that the Government were undesirous of dealing with the subject. I have said that the last measure passed was defective, and I will point out where I believe the defects were. I say, first of all, we require a simplification in regard to the issues submitted. The issues submitted were complicated. That was proved by the voting. Then, again, there was a difficulty as regards another point, and a number of elections were void owing to the limit of one-half being obliged to vote or else there was no election. We found that a very large number did not vote at all, and who, by that means, prevented the voice of the people from being properly obtained. That is a defect which I admit. I say the principle was sound of saying that there should be, at all events, a good vote taken; but advantage was taken of the defect I have pointed out, and hence, I say, a necessity has arisen for what we in this Bill propose. Then, there was, as members will have seen, no provision made in the Act of last session in case of removals. We extended the districts from the boundaries of local authorities' districts to the electoral boundaries. What was the result of that? Why, licenses could be transferred for miles to an entirely different district. We have a case at Kawakawa where a license was taken into a Native district; and licenses have been taken out of boroughs to country districts. That is a defect that needs to be remedied speedily. There is a certain responsibility which must attach to the Government, but I think, in a matter of this kind, it is one of those defects which might easily occur. In last year's Bill there was another serious defect, and that was with regard to the poll for national prohibition. It was confined to localities, with the result that only one locality in the colony declared for total prohibition. Those who favour the temperance cause stated that if a national poll could be taken the results would have been very different. I say this: that when a Bill is wanted by the people, and when you go on an issue of this kind, and where the issue is of such a nature as that embodied in this Bill, and where there has been an agitation for so long, and so large a section of the people demanding it, the sooner they have this question relegated to them the better. And I am very much mistaken if it is not found, as has been stated, that a very large number of the people are against total prohibition, and that the result will be in that direction. But what is wanted is to know what the mind of the people is, and to satisfy them: and it will satisfy the Legislature, at all events, that we have given them the opportunity that they asked for. In this respect it

Mr. Seddon

has been urged on the Government both by the trade and by the temperance reformers.

Sir R. STOUT.—What trade?

Mr. SEDDON.—The liquor trade.

Sir R. STOUT.—What has been urged?

Mr. SEDDON.—Total prohibition, or, rather, I should say, national prohibition, being referred to the whole of the people. That has been recommended. I may tell the House that if I were to lay on the table the communications the Government have received on this subject from the trade, from the moderate, and from the extremists on both sides, it would surprise honourable members. It would be very interesting, and, at all events, I believe that you will say that Ministers have acted very fairly to all concerned in the Bill now before you, and, having taken a course in the light of what has been expressed in the country, and in the communications the Government have received, we are not very far wrong in submitting the Bill. As I have said, the Bill, I believe, meets the wishes of a very large majority of the people in the country, and I shall be very much surprised when the Bill goes through and leaves this Chamber if there is any material alteration in it. I shall take charge of it, on going into Committee, with a great deal of confidence. As I said before, it is, Go as you please on the Bill; and I shall not be displeased. It will not be a question of "colour," but we shall have members freely and openly expressing their opinions, and voting as they believe in the best interests of the people. The issues submitted by the Bill are very simple—namely, the questions of reduction, national prohibition, or local prohibition. These are the three issues submitted to the people. As regards reduction, it has been urged on the Government that there is no necessity whatever for submitting this question to the people, but I believe, myself, that the necessity does exist, and that really what you require to do is to submit this to the people. Time after time you will find, as the minds of the people are on a subject, so they will vote, and a very large section will vote for reduction, believing it to be the best and surest way to attain reforms, and will not favour total prohibition. Then, there will be also the question of local prohibition. Some in a district will object to the privilege being taken from them which they have hitherto had of controlling or regulating the trade in their district, or of saying whether there shall be any liquor sold in their district: consequently that which has been urged on the Government, to abolish the vote for local option, we have refused. We have said the two questions shall be submitted. Then, we shall find in one part of the colony—I am alluding now to national prohibition—a very large majority voting for total prohibition, while in other districts we shall find a minority only voting for it; but, by taking the whole number of votes together, we shall, for the first time in our history, definitely know what number of persons in New Zealand, of the men and women of the country, have come to the conclusion that no liquor should be either

manufactured or imported or sold in New Zealand. I believe fault may be found with the Government for the manner of submitting this question to the people. I say this is only a matter of detail. If there can be further simplification, if it can be shown that any better mode of taking the votes of the people can be evolved than that in this Bill, I am, for my own part, and on behalf of the Government, quite prepared to accept such an amendment as will improve what has been submitted, so long as the principle is maintained. The principle, I am prepared to say, the Government will not be prepared to lose. We shall be told that by selecting the general election-day as the day on which to take the national poll, the local prohibition poll, and the poll for the reduction of licenses, we shall be mixing the liquor question with general politics.

HON. MEMBERS.—Hear, hear.

MR. SEDDON.—“Hear, hear,” say honourable members. Will they tell me that it is not and was not so at the last elections, and that that was not the day on which the poll was taken? I undertake to say that for the next twenty years, as long as there are those who wish to reform and consider this a means of reforming their fellows, so long will you find they will come to Parliament asking for these reforms, and, whether you have it on the election day or on any other day, it must enter the question of general politics. And when we know that is the case, is it not better to take the bold course and face it?

MR. BUCHANAN.—Bring in the Referendum.

MR. SEDDON.—The honourable gentleman knows the Referendum has been deferred, and he would like to defer this, perhaps, for a long period. I have been told that we have done wrong in deciding to bring down this Bill for the election on the election-day. What we want, in the interest of all concerned, is to have the largest number of votes recorded, either for or against, in respect to this question, and I say there is no day you can select when you will have the men and women with so much public feeling and public spirit aroused. You have the men and women of our country, whose minds at that particular period are bent upon electing the best men to make our laws. The next question is, What laws shall be passed? I say it may be urged reasonably that those who wish to change it and have a special day set apart do not desire to have the voice of the men and women of the country on this most important question. I hope, therefore, they will see their way to support the proposal of the Government in this respect. Now, there is also another phase of the question—perhaps I shall be told that in dealing with so large a subject it should not be allowed to enter into the matter at all—that is, the question of expense. But I say you cannot separate that question. No doubt a very heavy expense was thrown upon the local authorities by having the election on a separate day. If, again, we fix on election-day, as proposed by this Bill, the whole expense will be thrown on the taxpayers

of the colony. But by having these questions decided on the day of the general election there will be economy, and it will not cost half so much to have it on that day as if we had a separate day for the election on the liquor question. There is one point on which I have no doubt a great many will differ from the Government, and that is, that by making the election-day the day for the elections under the Licensing Act we shall have many disagreeing with the proposal because we have taken away the local elections of the Licensing Committees. It was impossible to have two days, one for the Committee and the other to decide upon local prohibition and national prohibition and reduction. And if you had simply a day set apart for the election of the Committees you would have a mere handful of persons recording their votes, but a very heavy expense thrown upon the rate-payers of the districts. There was a necessity, as the Act stood in 1891, for an annual election; but under the law as it now stands, and as proposed under this Bill, the larger question has been referred to the people, and the Committees have now only matters of administration to attend to, and even this under prescribed limits. I say, if the laws in respect to this question are defective, we shall have the men and women demanding that there shall be reform, and that the laws shall be amended. There is nothing whatever, in my opinion, to fear from this course. You can never have, and never will have, the same vote taken on this question as on a general-election day. But, having taken

9.30. the direct power of control from the Committees, and having carried that power direct to the people, then I say the Committees' functions are simply administrative. They are restricted by law, and the people are performing the general functions previously given to the Committees. Hence there is no necessity now for the elected Committees under the Act of 1891. Then, we shall be asked whether the course we have adopted in regard to the Committees will meet with approval. I say that, as long as they do not hold any very strong opinions, we thought that by selecting the heads of local bodies, who are representative men, and who know the requirements of the different localities within the licensing district, we should get men with responsibility upon them, representative men, and at the same time we should see that the different parts of the district were represented. I say that local knowledge in dealing with a question of this kind is an important factor.

AN HON. MEMBER.—What about the cost?

MR. SEDDON.—It will not cost so much money as at present, because they are only allowed 10s., and I suppose that some districts will not have three members. That is the lowest number, but some districts may have ten, twelve, or fifteen. That is about the largest number they can have. If we want to reduce the number of members, that is very easily done by striking out some of the heads of the local bodies mentioned in the Bill who are to be members of the Committee. It will be a very simple thing to reduce the

number of members. We have insisted upon the Stipendiary Magistrate sitting on the Committee, and we have insisted that he shall be Chairman. It has been suggested that you should do away with the Committee, and simply have the Stipendiary Magistrate in the various electoral districts to perform the functions of the present Licensing Committees. I myself do not favour that. I have no doubt the work would be done well, but at the same time I do not desire to take from the districts the local representation that they would have if what we have provided in the Bill is adhered to. Several amendments have been proposed in this Bill which are not of the same importance and magnitude as those I have hitherto referred to. Still, they are necessary amendments. It is a long time since the original Act was passed. Many changes have taken place, and, in the working of the law, defects have been found out; but there has never been a Government bold enough to come down to the House and bring in a measure, and attempt to pass it, in order to carry out the needed reforms. We were bold enough last year, and we have not lacked the courage of our convictions, and the Act we then passed is now under review. I will point out some of these amendments. First of all, we say, if we are to have local option, and if we are going to reduce the publichouses, then there are some four districts in the colony where they have bottle licenses, and I say bottle licenses are not necessary, and have promoted abuses, and the sooner they are taken away the better it will be for all concerned. Then, there was a power given to issue conditional licenses by order of simply two members of a Committee. That power has been abused, and we have by this Bill taken it away, and said that a majority of the Committee must grant these conditional licenses. But there are many who would go further and say that no conditional licenses at all should be granted. Then, in respect to wholesale licenses, fault has been found because the Government increased the minimum amount of fermented liquor that could be sold under a wholesale license from two gallons to five. The Government have information that in prohibited districts the brewers and wholesale merchants were simply being transformed into retailers owing to the small quantities allowed to be sold under the law as now existing. It has been pointed out that the quantity of five gallons—as regards fermented liquor—is a mistake, and that four gallons should be substituted. Four gallons would be a more convenient quantity so far as the trade is concerned. Therefore in making that amendment we are not hampering the Bill in any way. With reference to this matter, I would ask the House, why should the expressed will of the people in that respect be nullified? If the people, by a large majority, demand that these proposals shall be carried, I say we should not allow any section of the community to stand in the way of the will of the people, and the proposals we have made in this respect go in that direction. I shall have the attention

Mr. Seddon

of the honourable member for Wanganui when I tell him that the next question I shall deal with is the question of New-Zealand-wine licenses. In making the proposal to do away with the issue of wine licenses, I say that in some licensing districts where prohibition might be carried a number of these New-Zealand-wine licenses might spring into existence. The keepers of these wine-houses might have wine on their front shelves, but they might also have something stronger behind, and that is why we propose to do away with the wine licenses. The Government do not feel very strongly upon this point. We should like, as far as we can, to encourage the local industries, and we should like the people to take more of the light wines and eschew the stronger drinks. It would be better for them.

An Hon. MEMBER.—It has worked very well so far.

Mr. SEDDON.—Where they have worked very well it has been where licenses have existed. But if prohibition is carried in a district, and we leave wine licenses only to be granted, I question very much if it would do good. For example, at present, where a number of publichouses have been closed, they have no sooner been closed than application has been made to the Colonial Secretary to grant club licenses. Therefore if houses with New-Zealand-wine licenses were opened they would be very likely to have something stronger if the occasion required. It has been urged that the Government should have introduced simply a Bill of two or three clauses amending the Act of last session, and it has been urged that the better course to have followed would have been for the Government to have brought down a consolidation Bill. My answer to that is that we know the defects existing, and we know that the sooner they are remedied and rectified the better for all concerned; and there will be no more difficulty, to my mind, in getting this Bill through than there would have been had we brought down simply a Bill amending the defects that have been found in the Act of last session. With regard to those who are satisfied with the Bill, and who desire earnestly to promote it, there is no necessity for them to do anything which will retard its progress. Those who are opposed to the respective reforms would take the same time with a Bill of only a few clauses as over a Bill with numerous amendments. In this respect, therefore, there would have been no saving of time whatever. They would have passed the Bill this session; and next session, if these defects still existed, the Government would be met with demands to remedy them, and to bring another Bill in next session. I say it is better to go direct to the existing law, and to meet each and every defect—to bring it to the front and to the light of day. The bolder course is the best course, and the Government have adopted it by bringing down this consolidating measure. In respect of this Bill, I said the other day, and I say again, that the best course would have been to have read the Bill a second time *pro formâ*, and to have referred it to the

Statutes Revision Committee. No doubt the same care would have been bestowed upon the Bill by that Committee as upon any other measures that go there. Necessary amendments could have been considered in that Committee, and when the Bill came back here to go through Committee of the Whole its time in Committee would have been greatly shortened. That is why I favoured referring it to the Statutes Revision Committee. I will now go shortly through the several amendments which I wish to call the attention of honourable members to. If the House will refer to the section of the Bill which deals with chemists, druggists, and military canteens, it will see that amendments have been made which were considered necessary. There is a further amendment in regard to restricting the expansion of the trade. By the Bill of last year we said that there should be no further increase in public-house licenses. That provision has been further amended in the direction I have indicated. Taking Wellington as a case in point, we thought that to have to wait until there was an increase in the population of 25 per cent. was a mistake. There has been a reduction here, no doubt, but I think it will be admitted that in Wellington at the present time there is a legitimate demand for first-class hotel-accommodation, and, if at the present time they had to wait for this increase of population, it is very questionable whether or not any one could be found to embark on such a venture. Power is given under the Bill to increase the number of licenses on a 10-per-cent. increase of population. With respect to that, I think the Government are wise in making this provision. Representations in this particular matter have been made by those who take an interest in the welfare of the public. I think even the senior member for Wellington City has stated that he has been unable to obtain the accommodation at an hotel that he desired, and that he has had to seek other accommodation. Another amendment has been made in the existing law. We know what has taken place as regards the disqualification of members of the Committee. That has been urged as a reason why the reduction or granting of licenses by Committees was *ultra vires*. The amendment in the Bill before the House is such that, no matter what disqualification may exist, what has been done by the Committee will stand good, and, I think, properly so. Now with regard to the alteration of special districts. As regards special districts in the past, the power that was given to the Governor to act irrespective of the wishes of the people is taken away under this Bill, and, I think, properly so. It was a source of anxiety to the Government. They have been requested to override the will of the people. I say they should not be placed in that position; and in the Bill before the House the Government have made an alteration in respect to these special districts which will curtail the power previously given. The next reform is in regard to the Native districts. I think, myself, the amendment we have made here is a proper one

to make—that is, that no more Native licensing districts can be created. Then, Sir, even in respect to existing districts, power is taken to reduce, and the opinion of the Committee is to be taken in respect to granting licenses there. For my part I should be prepared, were it not that the Government have undertaken responsibilities in respect to these special licensing districts which might involve the colony to some extent—were it not for that I should be prepared to sweep away every Native licensing district in the colony. Sir, there have been restrictions made as regards packet licenses. It has been urged upon the Government that a number of those small trading steamers in some of the small harbours in the north, and along the coast—just very small steamers indeed—it has been urged upon the Government that these steamers are simply floating hotels; and we have been asked that control should be placed over steamers: and I believe myself it is necessary. We may not, in this respect, have gone as far as we might, but we had not sufficient detail information to guide us in going further than is shown in the Bill. But there are those who have local knowledge, and who desire to prevent what is now alleged to be going on in respect to the small steamers going to the wharves in the country districts, and as to what takes place there, and selling to those who go to the gumfields. If that is carried on on these small steamers it ought to be met. In this Bill, therefore, we have restricted it. Now we come to the question of clubs and charters to the clubs. Honourable members will recollect that last session the Government made an honest attempt to place the clubs under the same restrictions as licensed premises in the colony as regards selling after hours. Sir, I myself do not see why these restrictions should not be placed upon them. I fail to see why there should be one law for the hotelkeeper and another law for clubs. If you are to close or reduce the number of the houses, or close them altogether, it means, then, that every member is forced to go to the club, and can get at the club what the majority of the people have said he should not obtain. They will say the licensing-law is a sham, because you leave the door open to an abuse: and any well-conducted club would not object to the provision we have put in this Bill. And all those who follow club life should be brought to the same level as their fellows who cannot afford a club life. I believe objection has been taken by the working-men's clubs to this provision. I will say this: I am sure I shall be supported by the wives of working-men whose husbands frequent these clubs, who will say that the Government is quite right in bringing forward this restriction, and insisting upon the clubs being closed at proper hours. In order that the Colonial Secretary may be kept from temptation, we have inserted in the Bill a provision that where a publichouse is closed no club charter shall be given for those premises. We have also said that the Colonial Secretary must be guided by the opinion of the people

in the district on the matters at issue in respect to the main principles of the Bill. We say that they should regulate clubs just as well as they should regulate public-houses. Now, then, Sir, some injustice has been done to the owners of hotel property by legislation of the past. In bringing a measure forward that is to meet all cases it is our duty to do that which is fair and just to all concerned. There is no necessity to be harsh. The will of the people must rule; but, while we agree to that, I say there have been cases of hardship under our law which demand rectification. I allude to where, a tenant having a lease at the time the law was passed, with no covenant in that lease for the landlord to step in where a breach of the Licensing Act has been committed, in such case the conviction of the tenant would destroy all value in the property to the owner, and yet the owner could not interfere. By the amendments we have made it is provided that where a conviction is recorded notification is to be sent to the owner of the premises, and the owner can take steps to set aside the lease. We think that provision is necessary. Then, again, we have made provision that where the houses are closed owing to the will of the people in that respect the tenant can be relieved of his lease. He is not responsible in any way for what has taken place, and hence he should not be called on to pay a high rent, based upon the premises being licensed, whilst the license, by the will of the people, has been ordered to be taken away. I think we have done what is just to the owners and also to the lessees of the premises. Sir, there is little more for me to say in respect to the measure that is before the House. Even to-night the Government have been twitted as to whether we are sincere or not in bringing this Bill forward. Sir, I desire to say this: that no graver charge could be hurled against the Government than that it would bring measures forward without wishing to see them passed. We represent a majority in the House; we are responsible to the people; and to say that we should bring a measure forward without having any desire to see that measure passed and become law—I say that is an accusation that should not be lightly made. It has been made, Sir. I unhesitatingly tell members that since the last election under the Licensing Act we have earnestly gone into the liquor question—honestly and earnestly we have endeavoured to meet both sides after what has taken place, and we have endeavoured to rectify all mistakes; so that, I say, the accusation that has been made should never be made again. The Government feel satisfied that as the matter now stands it has arrived at that stage that it must be set at rest. The only way to set it at rest is to do what we have done in the Bill now before the House. We have, as far as we could, endeavoured to deal with the question in a way that will commend itself, I believe, to the large majority of the members of the House; and I believe it will commend itself to the large majority of the people of the country. We have been told that this measure has been

Mr. Seddon

forced upon the Government. Sir, if reforms are demanded, we are a free country; we are a Responsible Government; if we do not do that which the people demand, and which is in the interests of our men, women, and children, why, then, I say, we should not be here very many days. We should not deserve to be here, because I say that where reforms are demanded, and where it is the wish of the people that these reforms should take place, and where we can improve the condition of the country and the people, it is our right and duty to do it. We are not forced one jot in respect to this measure, but what we are doing we are doing with a conscientious conviction that, until it is dealt with, other matters of serious importance will be interfered with, to the detriment of the State. Sir, I said that those who were desirous of passing this Bill should, at this late period of the session, take up as little time as they possibly can. I do not want it to be said that the Government wish the gag to be applied. Those who are against this measure, and the arguments that are advanced in its favour, of course must be met, but they can be met reasonably and fully, and it does not require half a dozen members to get up and repeat what some other member has said. In this way, I say, a great saving of time can be effected. I take this opportunity of saying this: The Government may be twitted with having brought this Bill forward rather late in the session, but I would say, in respect to that phase of the question, that the time we had devoted to it. The Government were in communication with people on the subject, and our desire was to make it as perfect a Bill as possible before we introduced it, and that delayed its introduction for some time; and, Sir, there are some other measures we have introduced which the Government could not reckon would be necessary when the session commenced—members of the House know to what I allude: and that also delayed the opportunity of bringing this measure forward. I say again, some of our large policy questions demanded our attention, and we were justified in having those measures dealt with before introducing this Bill. I hope we shall get through the second reading to-night. In the debate upon the second reading members will learn pretty well, by the interchange of thought, the views that are held by the different members upon the Bill and upon the proposals therein contained. That being the case, I hope to be in a better position to approach it when we go into Committee, and when in Committee I hope that members will do, in respect to this Bill, as they have done with other Bills during the session respecting the convictions of others. There are men who hold different views upon this question. I myself hold the views that are contained in this Bill, and there is nothing that has been forced upon me. I have here the pleasure of stating that for the whole time I have been in public life on the West Coast of New Zealand, notwithstanding what may appear strange to honourable members, I have always had the support of the temperance sec-

tion of the community. I have always consistently supported local option. Never was I afraid of the people, or of referring matters to the people, so long as they understood the questions and had opportunities of expressing opinions in a practical manner on them, and in this matter there was no difficulty in that respect. Verily, very rash things are said of the Government and of myself, and they will, no doubt, be said of honourable members on both sides of the House who hold strong views, and who conscientiously wish to give effect to those views, and who may vote for or against what is in the Bill. I say, Sir, that these

10.0. intemperate remarks, this stirring-up of strife, produces bad blood and keeps back reforms. If we want to show respect for each other, and conscientiously to do that which we believe to be for the benefit of our fellows, then we shall do what myself and my colleagues are doing in bringing this matter before Parliament in the shape of the Bill now under discussion, and which with confidence I ask may be read the second time.

Mr. McNAB.—I do not intend to detain the House very long, Sir, in speaking on this Bill. The honourable gentleman who moved the second reading of it has gone very fully into the details of the Bill, and I do not intend to follow him through them, whether to state to the House my adherence to the principles contained in the Bill or to intimate on what points I intend to oppose them. I look upon it that every member in this House has made up his mind as to the principles of the Bill—whether he is going to support them or to oppose them—and it is therefore not advisable at the present time to go through the principles of the Bill at any great length. The honourable gentleman who moved the second reading gave as a reason why we ought not to discuss this Bill at any great length that it is now verging towards the end of the session, and the great policy measures of the Government are not yet brought down for discussion. Therefore our only hope of getting the Bill into Committee and carried through the House is to discuss it at the present stage as briefly as we can. It is perfectly plain that the only time which can be given us for discussion is this evening, and, if the Bill does not get through its second reading this evening, it is very doubtful whether the Premier will be able to afford the necessary time to continue the discussion of the second reading at any later date. So, Sir, I am not going through the principles of the Bill this evening. I intend to say just one or two words in regard to some of the matters raised by the Premier when he was moving the second reading. I am one of those who regret that the Government did not see their way to bring down their amendments simply in the form of an amending Bill. I think it was a mistake to bring this measure down as a consolidating measure, and I will shortly give my reasons for thinking so. The last consolidating measure relating to licensing legislation was the Act of 1881. It is a very lengthy measure, of some two hundred and thirty sec-

tions. Since that Act was passed into law—and it is an Act which I think has served its purpose very well in its day and generation—there have been certain amendments. There is an amending Act which was passed in 1882, which at the present time has only some nine clauses in operation. In 1889 there were two amending Bills passed; one of them has only two clauses now in operation, and the other has only one. The Act of last year contains twenty-three clauses. So altogether, outside the last consolidating measure of 1881, there are only thirty-five clauses now in operation. I think, if one looks at the weak points, as indicated by the mover of the Bill, in the Act of last session, he will find that almost every one of them is contained in the form of some amendment of those thirty-five different clauses. We have had intimated to us by the Premier that one of the defects of last year's Bill was that the issues were complicated. Now, the issues were placed before the people by the Act of last session. The second great defect in the legislation of to-day is that the number of votes required is beyond all reasonable limits: one-half of them would suffice. Now, this is another amendment of the Act of last year; so that if we had simply a measure of some thirty-five clauses, making what changes are necessary, some of the greatest defects in the legislation of to-day could be removed.

Mr. SEDDON.—That would not cure the defects in the original Act.

Mr. McNAB.—The sections amended the previous consolidating Act of 1881, and if you amend the amending sections you can get the necessary amendments on the original Act. Now, another difficulty I see in the way of a consolidating measure is this: Nearly all consolidating measures are sent to the Statutes Revision Committee, and, as one member of that Committee, the difficulties which this Licensing Bill will have to meet in its passage through that Committee have been brought very forcibly under my notice. We have before us at the present time no less than three of the largest consolidating measures which have ever passed this House, and we require to meet now almost every morning, and the Committee has had to set back four measures while it has been working at one consolidating measure. Now, if this consolidating measure is also to go to the Statutes Revision Committee, that is tantamount to saying it is as dead as a door-nail.

Mr. TANNER.—It will not go there.

Mr. McNAB.—I agree with those who think it should not go to that Committee; but if it does not go there we are met with another difficulty—that of fighting out the amendments on the floor of this House. I do not think that the honourable gentleman who will have charge of the Bill in Committee will have a very pleasant job. I should not like to be in that honourable gentleman's shoes even if I were to be Premier of the colony for the time being, and I think that the difficulties he will meet with will show him very distinctly that it would have been much better had this

been dealt with as an amending Bill, and not as a consolidating Bill. You cannot refer a Bill like this to any particular Committee and expect to get justice done to it. In this House there are two parties—one requiring legislation in one direction and the other requiring legislation in another direction. We cannot, in a Committee, represent properly the tone of the House; and when it comes before a Committee, especially if it goes to the Statutes Revision Committee, the treatment it will receive from honourable members will not conduce to remedy those defects which ought to be cured. They will only compare it with previous legislation and make small verbal amendments. I do not know that that will meet the wishes of the House. For instance, take this question of the constitution of the Licensing Committees. Some of us hold this point of view: that we should get back to the old form of Licensing Committee, which was elective, in place of the nominated Committee which this Bill proposes. I think there is a very strong feeling in the House that we ought not to adopt this new plan. Now, no Committee which we might refer the Bill to could possibly expect to know the opinion of the House: it would not dare to strike out the clause providing for a nominated Committee, and put in the old clause relating to an elective Committee. These are some of the difficulties which will have to be faced by a Committee in dealing with this Bill, and this it is which forces on one the conviction that it would have been far better had an amending Bill been brought down. However, the Bill has been brought down, and it is our duty to assist the honourable gentleman who moved the second reading to get it put through the second-reading stage with all convenient speed, even if we have to sit till to-morrow to do it. I understand there are a large number of honourable members who would like to express their opinions upon it. My opinion will be expressed, I am satisfied, in the divisions that are taken as the Bill passes through Committee; therefore I will not detain the House any longer in discussing it, and I hope that we shall be able to go on to the second reading, and pass it through to-night. It is one of those Bills which, no matter whether we support or oppose them, must pass the second-reading stage. If you are in favour of legislation which is said to be contrary to the temperance interest of the country, you can vote for the second reading in order to get it into Committee and there put in what sections you may want. If you are in favour of temperance legislation you can vote for the second reading, and put in clauses in Committee to suit yourself. I shall therefore vote for the second reading, and I will not detain the House any longer.

Mr. COLLINS.—I will not detain the House very long, but I can scarcely let the Bill go to a second reading without expressing just one or two words with regard to it. I agree entirely with the remarks which fell from the Premier in his judicious introduction of this Bill, when

Mr. McNab

he said that it was scarcely likely to satisfy both parties. He said it would not please the temperance party, who by their intemperance or intemperate utterances injure their own cause; and I feel quite sure that, while it will not altogether please the temperance party, it is not quite calculated to please the opposite party. And, if this be so, all I can say is that this ought to be the measure's strongest commendation. It has already been said that ample opportunity will be offered for discussing the details of the measure in Committee, and I am as anxious as any man in the House to have the opportunity of discussing the details of the Bill in Committee. But, Sir, the second reading of the Bill is an important matter, and this undoubtedly is an exceedingly important measure, and I should scarcely like the second reading to pass without just expressing one or two opinions with regard to it. I am under the impression, Sir, that in dealing with legislation of this kind a greater amount of care should be exercised than in legislation of any other character. It is quite questionable whether this specific form of legislation is actually demanded by the country. It is demanded by a clamorous section of the country, but I say it is quite a question whether this legislation is actually demanded by the country at large. Nevertheless Parliament has decided to legislate, and, that being so, we should give the Bill before us our serious and earnest consideration. There are one or two points to which our attention has been called, and to which I hope very close attention will be given. First of all, there is the matter of the election of the Committee. That has already been referred to. I myself hold very strong views with regard to this matter, but I do think, when we come to consider the subsections of clause 12, it will be found necessary to make some radical alterations before this Bill can be made a workable Bill. Then, the Premier himself has drawn attention to the clauses of this Bill which are destined to have a distinct and direct reference to clubs; and he has referred particularly to working-men's clubs. Now, Sir, I do hope, if any clause be agreed to as affecting clubs at all, that that clause or this enactment will apply to clubs of every kind,—not only to working-men's clubs, but to the clubs which do not belong distinctively to the working-classes. If we are to have special enactments relating to clubs, let them apply all round. I should like to ask honourable members to be very careful in dealing with this matter, lest they should actually defeat their own object. I have expressed myself often upon this matter, but I have been particularly misrepresented. In speaking as I do I speak as a lifelong total abstainer, and I am anxious that true temperance should receive no check. I am anxious that true temperance principles should be firmly and soundly grounded in our people. I am anxious that our people should be essentially a sober and temperance-loving people. I am quite convinced that intemperate legislation does more than anything else to retard the true temperance principles

that we desire to see in progress. And I would ask this House, in considering the matter of clubs, to act guardedly. The Premier himself drew attention to one fact when he said that we should have to deal with bottle licenses; and, in speaking of bottle licenses, he said they were the scourge of the country. Well, I am inclined to agree with him. But why are they a scourge? Because bottle licenses lead to home drinking. There is no doubt about it. And what bearing has this upon a community? Simply this: If you compel working-men to regard their club in exactly the same light and position as the upper ten regard their particular club, it is, practically speaking, placing these clubs not in any sense in the light of a hotel or publichouse; and if you compel working-men to close their clubs, or practically to refrain from selling drink at all, you are simply causing these men to combine together to take drink to their own homes. I maintain that that would be prejudicial to their own families. It is infinitely better that they should have their drink at their club than that they should turn their own private houses into clubs; and I hope the case will be very carefully considered when this matter comes to be dealt with. Then, the Premier in his remarks stated with regard to this licensing matter that it must be the rule of the majority—the will of the majority must rule. I am just as strong a democrat on this matter as the honourable gentleman himself is; I believe in majority rule; but I am under the impression that there are some matters on which the majority ought not to be allowed to rule. There are some matters on which the majority itself is incompetent to decide as affecting the individual. There is no doubt that legislation of this particular character has been introduced as the result of clamour which has been entirely for the suppression of the drink traffic. Call it what you may, hide it as you may, this legislation is in reply to a demand for total prohibition. You may imagine, if you please, that by this particular enactment you will satisfy the prohibition party. Sir, you will do nothing of the kind. They are strong enough, they are bold enough, and persistent enough to carry on with that assiduity that is characteristic of their work. If you pass this measure you will not satisfy them, and they will not be satisfied until entire prohibition is attained. Now, I should regard prohibition by a majority as an unwarrantable infringement of the rights of the minority, which ought not to be infringed; and I think it is as well that the House should keep this fact distinctly in view when we come to consider the details of the Bill. The Premier observed that in the course of dealing with this matter many harsh things had been said on both sides. I know that the Premier has suffered himself in this respect; but I do not know that harsh words do very much harm after all: at any rate, the harm done, is done rather to the harsh speakers themselves—that is my opinion. There is no reason, however, why any acrimonious utterances should be introduced into the debate on

this question. As I said before, I simply desired to express one or two thoughts upon the second reading of this Bill, so I shall leave the consideration of the details for Committee. There are many points in which I should like to see amendments introduced, but, as we all desire to send the Bill to Committee as speedily as possible, I shall trespass on the time of the House no further.

Mr. HEKE.—Sir, I wish to say a few words in reference to Native licensing districts. I think the Native districts should be maintained. In fact, I should like to see them made prohibition districts, and to give the Native Committee of the district the right to allow licenses to be granted in those districts or not, or leave it to a majority of the Natives: if a majority wished it, well and good. I have a case in point. The Natives in one portion of my district have informed me that the Licensing Committee have granted a license which belongs to a place about thirty miles away from this Native district, and the Natives of this district have been protesting against that action, but, having no power, they can do nothing at all in the way of opposing that action. The Natives on two or three former occasions raised some opposition when several Europeans tried to get an hotel erected, and they were successful in their opposition. The law at present in force does not give them any power to make any opposition at all or to give that opposition any effect. I should like to see all Native licensing districts that have been proclaimed in years past proclaimed now as prohibition districts, and when the Bill is in Committee I will urge that provision be made to this effect. I have also been informed by one of the Native chiefs of Gisborne, named Hirini te Kani, who is one of the greatest chiefs there, that a pa near Gisborne should be prohibited from introducing any liquor into that place. He states that in former days it was a general rule among them to bar all Natives or Europeans from taking liquor into the settlement. In this respect I would urge that some provision should be inserted in the Bill to give effect to the wish of this Native chief. I have nothing more to say except to urge upon honourable members that it is only fair that every Native settlement should have a voice in granting licenses in their own district, and to say, further, that where the Natives are strongly opposed to the granting of licenses their opposition should be given effect to. The Premier, in answer to a question which I had asked on this matter, did not give me a definite reply; but I suppose we cannot do anything in the matter at the present time, under the present state of the law. It is, however, my earnest desire that all Native settlements should be proclaimed prohibition districts.

Mr. SAUNDERS.—I am very sorry, Sir, to be the guilty party in rising, under the circumstances which now surround this Bill, and when both parties seem to have agreed that we are not to talk; but it is one of those subjects upon which I feel bound to express my earnest opinion. I have been very much pleased at

the speech we have listened to from the Premier to-night, because I recognise in that speech a very rapid progress on his part towards what I consider a more just, a more impartial, and a more statesmanlike view of the liquor question. There is very little in that speech with which I do not agree, and I am the more pleased to say so because, with reference to the action of certain careless, rash, intemperate writers towards the Premier, I feel myself strongly called upon to assure the Premier that the temperance members in this House have not a particle of sympathy with the coarse abuse that has been heaped upon the Premier in connection with this Bill, and would feel degraded by any association with such unjustifiable language. The Premier has met us very fairly indeed, and the Bill itself appears to me to contain very honest efforts to make it a useful measure. But there is one very great defect in the Bill, and one which I trust will not be persisted in by the Government—that is, the constitution of the Licensing Committees. That is, I think, a very great blot on the Bill. I am not one of those who wish to go to extreme lengths. I entirely agree with the Premier when he says it is most desirable that the elections shall be held on the general-election day, so that we shall have the full expression of public opinion, because I do not believe it would be of the least use to remove these licenses by a minority of the people, if you could do so. What we want to get at is the real opinion of the country upon the subject, and there is no device that I can think of that would so easily bring that about as to vote for decrease or no decrease of licenses, and to hold the elections for Licensing Committees on the same day as the general election. I do not see anything in what was said by the Premier to prevent the election of a Committee on the same day that we vote on the decrease. I cannot see why you cannot elect the Committee on the same day when you express your opinion on the question of licenses for the district. I hope that will be done, and that there will be a Committee elected on the same day as the vote is taken on the other question. Not only do I think that the proposal in this Bill with regard to the Committee would do away with any useful expression of public opinion, but it would take away the right of the temperance party, or any other portion of the community, to give full and fair expression to their opinions as to the men they would trust to carry out any reforms. And, then, what I am surprised that the Premier does not see is this: that in the polling for the Committee as now proposed it would introduce the extreme votes of the temperance party, and the more extreme and interested votes of the liquor party, into every election of the local bodies. It would come into the election of Mayor; those two very objectionable and disturbing elements would come into the election of Road Boards, Town Boards, Education Boards, Harbour Boards, Hospital Boards, and Charitable Aid Boards. They would all become subjects for a contention between the

Mr. Saunders

temperance party and the extreme liquor-selling party. That, I think, would be most fatal to anything like what we should have, or anything like wise selection of the members of those Boards, because I cannot think for one moment that either members of this House or members of any Board ought to be elected or rejected on any grounds of that kind. We ought not to be asked to put men on County Councils or Harbour Boards because they are or are not teetotalers. When the country comes to elect the Licensing Committees we have a right to express our opinions on that licensing question, and we should vote for that purpose. That is the principle I hope to see. As the House has set such a good example in this debate, I shall not any longer trespass, but I do hope, Sir, that that one great blot will be removed. It is a great blot, and it

will tell against the Bill in more ways than one, so that I hope the Premier will accept some amendment when we go into Committee.

MR. SEDDON.—Mr. Speaker, I am delighted at the course which has been taken by the House, with what has been said respecting this Bill, and at the manner in which the Bill has been received. I will not take more than two minutes to reply to the several objections. My only regret is that the honourable member for Mataura should have still expressed the opinion that an amending Bill ought to have been brought down instead of the Bill now before us. I say that an amending Bill would have taken members a much longer time to discuss than this Bill. What I said in the commencement has been verified already. There has been no longer discussion, I think, on the Bill than there would have been on an amending Bill—in fact, less, because the amendments in an amending Bill would probably have appeared in a more acute form. Then, the honourable member omitted to refer to what I pointed out. He never met that at all. He referred to the thirty-eight clauses that are simply in the amending Act. He did not refer to the scores of clauses that require consideration and alteration—clauses over which I have burned the midnight oil in an endeavour to correct the errors in the existing law, and errors which no one knows better than he exist in the existing law. Why, Sir, there are the wine license, the bottle license, the special license, the Native-district license, the removal of licenses, the conditional license, all in the original Act; and does the honourable member tell me that we could have a perfect liquor-law if we allowed these to remain untouched? Sir, he was perhaps doing a little special pleading. I cannot believe he was wilfully desirous of keeping from honourable members the defects he knows exist in the original Act and that are amended by this Bill. I think I have said sufficient on that head. The rest of his remarks were well delivered, and, I think, much to the point. I must say I felt very much pleased to hear my old friend the honourable member for Selwyn this evening, and I hope he may long

be spared and long hold a seat in this House, even notwithstanding he may occasionally lecture us and chide us when we are erring, or when he thinks we are erring, for he always does it in a very nice fatherly way. I am very willing to listen to any advice he may give us, and I must say I am much pleased to receive his commendation with regard to this Bill. As to the point mentioned regarding the Committees, there is a difficulty. The matter was well weighed over before we came to the conclusion as to whether the members of the local bodies should be the Licensing Committee. There may be some ground for what he said regarding the liquor question being introduced into local government. But you cannot separate it from local government. Where are the moneys to come from to pay all the expenses in connection with the liquor question? Why, from the taxation of the rate-payers.

An Hon. MEMBER.—Worse luck!

Mr. SEDDON.—It may be worse luck, but that is the law; and this expenditure of moneys and receiving of moneys concerns the local bodies. Who will be called upon if you carry prohibition, or if you carry local option, or even if you carry reduction? It is the local bodies that to a great extent will be affected, so that, of course, in that way the question is introduced, whether the election is carried out in other ways or the Committee is appointed as provided in this Bill. But it would be impossible to elect a Committee on the same day as that on which you have the general election. At that time the minds of men and women would be carried away by dealing with the election of Smith, Jones, and Robinson to the Licensing Committees, when they ought to be paying attention to the more serious matter of the election of a gentleman to represent them in this House. I say that is an argument well founded, and that is where the difficulty is in having the election of a Licensing Committee on the same day as the general election. If, then, you are to have another day, there are two reasons against that: one is that you would only have the representatives of a very few to sit on the Committee, and the other is the expense of the election. If you object to introducing this matter into the elections for local bodies, then let us meet it as it has been met before. Let us have an official Licensing Committee; have the Stipendiary Magistrate and the official heads in the locality.

An Hon. MEMBER.—No.

Mr. SEDDON.—Then, if you will have local representation, I say there is only one way for it, and that is, to allow the local bodies to elect the Committee, if you do not take the heads of the local bodies as the Committee. There is no other way. These are the difficulties that beset myself and my colleagues in dealing with the Committee phase of the question. If, when the House is in Committee, a way out of the difficulty can be evolved which is an improvement upon what is proposed, then, as I said before, and as I repeated in introducing the Bill, the Govern-

ment will be quite prepared to accept any amendment that will solve the difficulty, and give us a good and workable measure. I was pleased to hear the honourable member for Selwyn make the remarks he did regarding the attacks that have been made upon myself,—attacks that have been entirely un-called-for, and made by men professing, Sir, to lead us to live in this world so that we may be prepared for a better place in the next life—men preaching Christian charity and forbearance, and yet at the same time, on the platform and in the columns of the Press, descending to scurrility, and using terms that are not used by laymen and by men who do not on the housetops proclaim themselves as better than their fellows, and for whom there might be some excuse. At all events, abuse and scurrility will not deter me from doing what I believe to be right. I am one of those who do not retaliate, and I have no intention of doing so, but what has been said will not deter me from doing what I believe to be right to all concerned. I have been told that this Bill is in the interests of the trade,—of the brewers and publicans; but, if I may judge from the protests that have been received from them, it must be a step in the direction of temperance reform, notwithstanding the protests that have been received from the extreme section of the temperance party. I may be told that it is the brewers and publicans who have been behind the Government, and that this is their Bill. It is nothing of the kind. I say, Sir, we shall never agree upon that. It is neither a brewers' and publicans' Bill nor a Bill of the extreme section of the temperance party, but it is a measure which, I say, goes a long way in the direction of reform: and it is a workable measure. It may require amending in some respects, but its principle is sound, and, if we carry the measure, I hope it will be the same as with the measure passed by Sir William Fox—that it may stand the test of time, and that we may have removed from politics, for some years at all events, this large and important question, which is exercising the minds of a very large number of the people of this colony.

Bill read a second time.

MINING COMPANIES BILL.

Mr. SEDDON, in moving the second reading of this Bill, desired to state that it had been found necessary to consolidate and amend the legislation in respect of mining companies. Objection might be taken, and probably would be, to this special legislation affecting mining companies, and it might be urged that mining companies should come under the main law as applied to other companies and under the Companies Act; but there were special features in connection with the mining industry which he thought demanded special legislation. In the working of the present law it had been found that it was defective in one or two respects. One was with regard to the holding of assigned interests without registration, and the holding-

over of the registration of these transfers. This had misled investors, and it was necessary that it should be legislated against. The material alterations, he might say, were in clauses 42 and 47 to 52. He thought that stringent precautions ought to be taken against these frauds that had taken place. These had prevented legitimate investments; and the safer they made mining ventures—the greater the precautions that were taken against fraud—the more legitimate would be the investments and the better it would be for the mining industry. Another material alteration was in respect to the winding-up of companies in liquidation. Time after time companies had gone into liquidation, and the unfortunate shareholders were called upon to pay costs month after month, and this was what was known in mining parlance as “stringing on.” Well, this stringing-on of liquidation should be put an end to, and the way to put an end to that was to put them under the Official Assignee of the district. Practically they were bankrupt companies. There was no disguising that fact, and generally they found in these districts that the Official Assignee or his agent was perfectly well qualified to undertake the task of winding up these companies. If that were done it would save a great deal of soreness, and, in his opinion, would save large sums of money, and there would not be the friction which obtained at the present time in respect to mining companies on the West Coast. One or two amendments had been pointed out to him, which he thought the Government would accept.

Sir R. STOUT would not oppose the Bill. The really new important provisions in it were two. One provision was that forcing the transferee of shares to register the transfer within thirty days if the transfer took place in this colony, sixty days if in one of the other Australasian Colonies, and one hundred and twenty days if in England. He did not object to that. He thought it was a wise provision. The shareholders of a company ought to be known, and the names ought to appear in the register-book. That would, perhaps, stop undue speculation in shares. The other new provision was simply this—it was hardly, as the honourable gentleman put it, to provide that the Official Assignee should be liquidator: it only gave power to the Judge to appoint him. He thought that was perfectly fair. Nobody could object in this matter if the creditors and shareholders agreed. The only remark he wished to make was that he thought it was a pity there was a separate Mining Companies Act at all. He thought mining companies could work perfectly well under the ordinary companies statutes. He had been, and was now, connected with several mining companies, and some of them were working not under the Mining Companies Act at all, but under the Joint-stock Companies Act. They found it was better than working under the Mining Companies Act. It was fairer both to shareholders and to creditors. He thought it would have been better simply to have taken the ordinary companies statutes, and, if it was necessary to make any slight

Mr. Seddon

amendments in respect to mining companies, that could have been done. In olden days a special statute was necessary to provide some simpler kind of mining partnership than that containing all the usual paraphernalia of a joint-stock company. But our mining legislation had grown year by year, so that now there was very little difference between it and the ordinary joint-stock companies legislation. He believed we could have one statute to do it all, and that that would have prevented many of what had been called “wild-cat” companies, such as had existed in all mining centres in the world. He did not, of course, offer any objection to the Bill, because there were a great number of mining companies registered now under the Mining Companies Act, but really he doubted the wisdom of having a separate Act, and, considering the number of Bills now before the House, he doubted very much whether this large consolidating measure should be put through this session. It might have been better to have brought in a Bill of three clauses altering the present law in the direction he had indicated. He would suggest to the honourable gentleman, if he found this Bill could not go through—because it had to go through both Houses—whether it would not be wise to introduce a short Bill of two or three clauses making the amendments suggested, and allow the consolidating Bill to stand over to next year.

Mr. SEDDON said the honourable gentleman's suggestion was thought of, but so many companies had been registered, and there had been such numbers of amendments made in the law, that it was thought better to consolidate the law first, and then, if necessary, do what was suggested later on.

Bill read a second time.

CRIMINAL CODE BILL.

IN COMMITTEE.

Clause 2.—Age of consent raised to fifteen.

Mr. SEDDON moved, That “fifteen” be struck out, with the view of inserting “sixteen.”

Motion agreed to, and “sixteen” inserted.

Mr. MILLS moved a new clause, providing that persons convicted of a capital offence since the 1st January, 1889, shall have the right of appeal.

Mr. THOMPSON moved, That progress be reported.

The Committee divided.

AYES, 14.

Buick	Hoke	Stout
Button	Maslin	Willis.
Crowther	Mitchelson	<i>Tellers.</i>
Flatman	Russell, W. R.	Meredith
Hall-Jones	Smith, G. J.	Thompson.

NOES, 34.

Buddo	Earnshaw	Kelly, J. W.
Carncross	Graham	Kelly, W.
Carnell	Hall	Lang
Carroll	Harris	Lawry
Collins	Hogg	Mackintosh
Duncan	Houston	McGowan

McKensie, R.	Pirani	Steward
McLachlan	Reeves	Tanner.
McNab	Saunders	
Morrison	Seddon	<i>Tellers.</i>
O'Regan	Smith, E. M.	Mills
Parata	Stevens	Montgomery.

PAIR.

<i>For.</i>	<i>Against.</i>
Russell, G. W.	Hutchison, G.

Majority against, 20.

Motion negatived.

The Committee divided on the question,
 "That the clause be read a second time."

AYES, 33.

Button	Kelly, J. W.	O'Regan
Carncross	Kelly, W.	Parata
Carnell	Lang	Pirani
Carroll	Mackintosh	Saunders
Collins	Maslin	Smith, E. M.
Duncan	McGowan	Stevens
Earnshaw	McKenzie, J.	Steward
Graham	McKensie, R.	Tanner
Hall	McLachlan	<i>Teller.</i>
Harris	Montgomery	Mills
Hogg	Morrison	Lawry.
Houston		

NOES, 16.

Buddo	Massey	Stout
Buick	Meredith	Willis.
Crowther	Reeves	
Flatman	Russell, W. R.	<i>Tellers.</i>
Fraser	Seddon	Mitchelson
Hall-Jones	Smith, G. J.	Thompson.

PAIR.

<i>For.</i>	<i>Against.</i>
Russell, G. W.	Hutchison, G.

Majority for, 17.

New clause read a second time.

Mr. BUTTON moved to strike out all the words after the word "the," in the first line, with the view of inserting the following words: "prisoner Chemis, now in Her Majesty's gaol at Lyttelton, under conviction for murder, shall have the right to apply to the Court of Appeal for a new trial, as provided in the four hundred and sixteenth section of 'The Criminal Code Act, 1893.'"

The Committee divided on the question,
 "That the words proposed to be inserted be so inserted."

AYES, 32.

Button	Hogg	Morrison
Carncross	Houston	O'Regan
Carnell	Kelly, J. W.	Parata
Carroll	Kelly, W.	Pirani
Collins	Lang	Saunders
Crowther	Lawry	Smith, E. M.
Duncan	Mackintosh	Stevens
Earnshaw	Maslin	Steward.
Flatman	McGowan	<i>Tellers.</i>
Graham	McKenzie, R.	Mills
Harris	McLachlan	Tanner.

NOES, 15.

Buddo	Hall	McNab
Buick	Massey	Meredith

Montgomery	Smith, G. J.	<i>Tellers.</i>
Reeves	Stout	Fraser
Russell, W. R.	Willis.	Mitchelson.
Seddon		

PAIR.

<i>For.</i>	<i>Against.</i>
Russell, G. W.	Hutchison, G.

Majority for, 17.

Words inserted.

Bill reported, with amendments.

The House adjourned at a quarter to two
 o'clock a.m.

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

Friday, 14th September, 1894.

First Readings—Second Reading—Telegraph Forms
 —Harbours Bill.

The Hon. the SPEAKER took the chair at
 half-past two o'clock.

PRAYERS.

FIRST READINGS.

New Zealand Company's Land-claimants
 Bill, Westland and Nelson Coalfields Adminis-
 tration Bill.

SECOND READING.

Ngaere and other Blocks Native Claims Ad-
 justment Bill.

TELEGRAPH-FORMS.

The Hon. Mr. BOWEN asked the Colonial Secretary, When the telegraph-forms issued by Government will appear without advertisements on the backs? Last year the Hon. the Colonial Secretary agreed with him that it was a very wrong thing for the Government to inconvenience the public and discredit the Government by disfiguring forms of this sort with advertisements. He was glad to see the advertisements on the postage-stamps had been discontinued, and he looked forward to seeing the same course taken with regard to the telegraph-forms. He now wished to ask his honourable friend how soon this would be done, as he had told the Council last year that he thought it would be done soon.

The Hon. Sir P. A. BUCKLEY said he had only one exception to take to his honourable friend's remarks, and that was, that he thought the Government had done something wrong. He (Sir P. A. Buckley) did not think the Government was wrong in anything they did. However, it would be a pleasant thing for his honourable friend to know that as soon as the present contract was out, in about six months from the present time, these advertisements would disappear.

HARBOURS BILL.

On the question, *That this Bill be committed*,
 The Hon. Mr. MONTGOMERY said, as he would not have an opportunity again before the Bill went into Committee, he desired to

explain one or two alterations in the Bill. The first one was as to the amount of money that might be borrowed as overdraft. This had been altered to one-half the amount of the ordinary income of the previous year. The other clause was of a very important character. The Committee had struck out the 4th clause of the Bill, as they objected very strongly to rates being levied on the value of the goods; and they had substituted a new clause, to which he desired to draw the attention of the Council:—

"The fourth section of 'The Otago Harbour Board Further Empowering Act, 1882,' is hereby amended by substituting the words 'five shillings' for the words 'three shillings' in the second and eighth lines thereof."

The Hon. Mr. SHRIMSKI would like to have a little more information on the subject. He desired to know whether the clause, which was being introduced in a public Bill, was not merely referring to the Otago Harbour Board, and, as such, whether it was not a local Bill, while the principal portion of the Bill was a public Bill.

The Hon. the SPEAKER said he could not give a ruling on the subject at present, as the clause was not before the Council, but was merely proposed to be introduced in Committee.

The Hon. Mr. BONAR wished to state, before the Bill went into Committee, that only one clause related to the Otago Harbour Board, but that the rest of the clauses were entirely of a general character. The Committee thought it inexpedient to extend generally to Harbour Boards of the colony the powers sought for in connection with one harbour, and therefore it was limited to the Otago Harbour Board. He might say that this clause was simply amending an Act, and not a local Bill. For the Otago Harbour Board last year there was a Bill presented, which was referred to the Private Bills Committee, and it was then decided that it was a public Bill. The decision was recorded, and the Bill passed, and it would be found in the statutes of 1893.

The Hon. Mr. McLEAN thought it would be well that a little more time should be given to the people of Dunedin to hear what was being done. Though he had voted for this clause he had done so with very great misgivings. It would be wise to allow the people of Otago to know what was proposed, because clause 4 was virtually a local Bill. They should wait to see if there were any objections to the clause. Of course there was necessity to do something, but whether this was a right or wrong course was a matter for consideration. If the proposal were advertised in Dunedin they would soon see whether it would meet the difficulty. He did not like there to be any ground for supposing that a provision was being smuggled in any way through the Council which would not bear the light of day; and, though he had voted for it himself, he thought there should be delay, and would propose that the committal of the Bill stand over for a few days, when, if there was no objection, it might be allowed to proceed.

Hon. Mr. Montgomery

The Hon. W. DOWNIE STEWART thought it would be quite sufficient, if the Bill was allowed to go through Committee, that its third reading should stand over.

The Hon. Mr. MONTGOMERY said the difficulty about postponing was that, in the event of the Hon. the Speaker deciding that the clause was one that should not be put in a public Bill, there would be no time for a local Bill to go through Parliament this session. He wished, therefore, to have a decision on the point as soon as possible. If it was a local Bill, and could not be put into this measure, then steps could be taken for the purpose of promoting a local Bill.

The Hon. Mr. OLIVER said this new clause was one of the utmost importance to the district which was affected by it. It seemed to him that by the insertion of a clause having such local application in a general Bill they were depriving the inhabitants who were affected of any opportunity of declaring their will on the matter. The Standing Orders with regard to local Bills provided that certain publicity should be given to any proposals that affected local interests, and, if they permitted the introduction of a clause of this character in a public Bill, then they would be overriding their Standing Orders, and would deprive the people affected of rights which had been conferred upon them, and which were very necessary in the public interest.

The Hon. W. DOWNIE STEWART would point out, in reference to what had been said, that this was a matter with which every inhabitant of Otago was familiar.

The Hon. Mr. OLIVER asked, What? With the proposition to increase the fees to the extent of 2s. per ton? He would undertake to say that this was an entirely new proposal, and that it had never even been mentioned. Instead of his honourable friend's assertion being capable of proof, he thought it was exactly the reverse.

The Hon. W. DOWNIE STEWART said no doubt the honourable gentleman was quite correct from what he might call a technical point of view, but the subject of increasing the dues had been very much discussed, and this was only as to the particular mode of increasing them. As it referred to Otago alone, this would be just as much a local Bill even if it made the dues *ad valorem*. The only difference between the present proposal and the previous one was as to whether the dues should be *ad valorem* or a tonnage rate.

The Hon. Mr. OLIVER said, No. The question was, whether it should apply to one locality or to the whole colony.

The Hon. W. DOWNIE STEWART said so far as Otago was concerned the question had been discussed for a considerable time as to whether or not *ad valorem* dues should be imposed or the tonnage rates increased. The people knew perfectly well, from the Press and otherwise, what had been going on, and were acquainted with the whole subject. Last year an Act was passed dealing with the Otago Harbour Board exclusively, and that had been declared by the Committee a public Act. He

would point out that delay in the matter would inflict very great injustice on the parties affected, and that if it was intended to kill the Bill it would be better to do so right away, so that the parties would know where they stood. He thought it would be better to pass the Bill through Committee, and to defer the third reading until Tuesday.

The Hon. the SPEAKER suggested that the discussion was somewhat premature, because the clause was not before him, and he could not rule upon it. He would suggest that the Hon. Mr. McLean should postpone any motion until the Bill had been through Committee.

The Hon. Mr. McLEAN was quite willing to do that. He had no objection to its going through Committee, so long as the third reading was delayed. All that he desired was to give time to ascertain whether the people of Dunedin were satisfied to let the Bill go through.

The Hon. Mr. STEVENS said the discussion in its present form might be premature or not, but certainly it would not be premature to discuss the clause which it was proposed to amend—that was, to discuss the clause in its original form; and that would raise the whole question of what was desired by the Bill and what was proposed by the amendment. The clause was to supplement the power of levying wharfage dues, with the view to helping the Otago Harbour Board out of very serious difficulties. The Board considered, apparently, that an additional £4,000 a year was absolutely indispensable. Now, the Committee had carefully considered this clause 4. The clause in the Bill was a proposal to impose *ad valorem* dues on goods—a principle which was quite novel as far as Harbour Boards were concerned, and which did not meet at all with the approval of the Committee. Instead of that, the Committee had put into the Bill a provision to increase the power of rating upon tonnage to the extent of 2s. per ton in the case of the Otago Harbour Board. That Board could now impose a rate of 3s. per ton, and the Committee proposed, as that proved insufficient, to enlarge it to 5s., instead of adopting the method, which was considered exceedingly objectionable and expensive, of *ad valorem* dues as proposed. That was really the whole question. The public of Dunedin had had an opportunity of discussing the *ad valorem* dues, and the Bill proposed that; but there seemed to be some difference of opinion in the Chamber of Commerce on the subject, or, at all events, *ad valorem* dues were not generally accepted as desirable. The Committee had, after full consideration of the case, proposed an increase of the Harbour Board improvement-rate. It appeared to him that the sooner the Bill was passed the better, for something must be done. Reference to the locality meant simply that they should receive an indication of which of two courses was preferred. Something or other must be done, and there were only two ways of doing it. That was really the whole question at issue. His view of the matter was that it would be well to pass the Bill in its present form, and then take another day for the third reading. It was very

desirable in the interests of the public that they should discuss this matter exhaustively, and he did not think that such a discussion had as yet taken place. The case was one of urgency of a very serious character indeed. He did not think the Council could bestow too much trouble in placing before the public the fullest information on the whole subject of the Otago Harbour Board, which, he ventured to say, was in a state of very serious difficulty indeed.

The Hon. Sir G. S. WHITMORE said it appeared to him that this clause was in the nature of a tack, and they might save time by discussing it now. He would make no objection to going into Committee, but the fact was, the clause had nothing to do with the Bill. The Bill was intended to become a general Act, and advantage would be taken of it by all the Harbour Boards of the colony; but this particular clause was put in in this way, in a place where nobody would think of looking for it, and it was clearly in the nature of a tack. It was put in for the purpose of getting something passed for the Otago Harbour Board. If this provision had been proposed in a local Bill, then the people concerned would have had an opportunity of objecting to it. He thought they ought to decide the matter before going into Committee, and that they would save time by so doing.

The Hon. Mr. OLIVER would like the ruling of the Hon. the Speaker as to whether this clause was not in contravention of the Standing Orders, as it was in the nature of a local Bill introduced into a measure of general import.

The Hon. the SPEAKER said that in the meantime the clause was not technically before the Council, until it had passed through Committee. When that had taken place he should be prepared to give his ruling on the subject.

The Hon. Mr. KERR thought it would be very awkward for the Dunedin Harbour Board to have this clause struck out, but it had a purely local reference. If it had been brought forward as a local Bill, and the necessary publicity given, then the public of Otago and the ratepayers concerned would have known all about it. He knew, from being on the Local Bills Committee, that the Hon. Mr. Oliver was very particular about local Bills, in seeing that everything was gone through correctly. Now, if they were so strict, so stringent, generally respecting these matters, what cause was there for the Council to step aside now in the interests of any one section? He considered that the clause should be struck out of the Bill, and a new Bill introduced.

Motion agreed to.

Bill committed, and subsequently reported, with amendments.

On the question, *That the Bill be read the third time,*

The Hon. Mr. MONTGOMERY said he had promised, in Committee, that he would ask the Hon. the Speaker's attention to a new clause in the Bill—clause 4. When the Bill was in Committee there was an opinion expressed by

honourable members that to pass this clause would be in contravention of the Standing Orders, as it only affected one locality, that of the Otago Harbour Board. The Chairman of the Committee had thought it was better—and there had been a consensus of opinion in the Council—that they should pass the clause, and then submit it for the Hon. the Speaker's ruling. He now desired to ask whether this clause—relating, as it did, to one part of the colony wholly and solely—that was, to Dunedin—could be inserted in a public Bill, and upon this ruling would depend the course to be taken.

The Hon. Mr. SHRIMSKI would point out, in reference to the clause, that it had no right whatever to be put in a public Bill. In addition to that, it was taxing the inhabitants of a certain district, and therefore ought not to be in this measure. If it had been brought in as a local Bill it would of necessity have been advertised, and the people would have had an opportunity of expressing agreement or disagreement with it. He further thought, as it was a taxing Bill, the Council ought not to introduce the clause. Indeed, he questioned if the Council had power to do that. A clause of this kind, when he was in the other Chamber, had always been introduced by Governor's message in Committee of the whole House. The clause had been put in by a Committee of the Council, and he thought that in doing so they had gone beyond their rights.

The Hon. Sir G. S. WHITMORE thought the chief objection to the clause was that it was introduced in a Bill of a very different character. No one, in matters connected with the Otago Harbour Board, would dream of looking into a general Act to find authority to add two-fifths to the taxation. He believed their Standing Orders were specially designed to prevent such things being done, and upon those grounds he thought the clause should be excluded.

The Hon. the SPEAKER said he was asked if the Legislative Council had power to insert new clause 4 into the Harbour Boards Act Amendment Act. This was a section in a public Bill amending a local Bill referring to a special locality. Special Standing Orders were provided for Bills affecting special localities only, with the object of protecting the rights and interests of every person concerned. The practice, therefore, of introducing a section of a purely local character into a public Bill was highly inconvenient, and afforded an objectionable and dangerous precedent. With respect to the power of the Council to insert such a section, the Council had, of course, power to do so, if it was considered desirable to do so.

The Hon. Mr. MONTGOMERY understood that the Hon. the Speaker considered it would be objectionable, but that the Council had power to insert it. He imagined that the power referred to was the power to suspend Standing Orders. This was a matter which, he thought, should be considered before they took further action. Had the Hon. the Speaker ruled that it was not only in their power, but was unobjectionable, he should have

asked that the Bill be read a third time after a reasonable delay. But he would now merely move, *pro forma*, *That the Bill be read the third time on Tuesday next*, with the view of then moving to have the Bill recommitted, in order to get this clause struck out.

The Hon. Mr. OLIVER thought this course would be inconvenient, as it would interpose obstacles to the matter being dealt with at all this session. If the original intention was adhered to, of having the Bill set down for reading on Tuesday week, then the Otago Harbour Board would probably take the necessary steps to have a local Bill introduced.

The Hon. Mr. MONTGOMERY said he saw no objection to that course, and would adopt it. He would move, *That the Bill be read the third time on Tuesday week*.

The Hon. Mr. BONAR hoped that an opportunity would be given to the people of Otago of introducing a local Bill. He was afraid that by postponing the third reading of this Bill till Tuesday week they might be stopping them from bringing in a measure, and did not know but what it would be better to suspend the Standing Orders in order to get over the difficulty.

The Hon. Mr. SHRIMSKI said he had it on good authority that the matter was not very urgent. Even the honourable gentleman in charge of the Bill—the Hon. Mr. MacGregor—had declared that there was no urgency; and, if it was not urgent, there was no reason why they should put a clause dealing with a private Bill into a public Bill, and prevent the people affected by it objecting to the measure.

The Hon. Mr. MACGREGOR was sorry that any member of the Council should, even unintentionally, misstate what had been said by another. He had surely failed to convey to the Council his meaning, when speaking in Committee on the question, if he had conveyed to any member the impression that this Bill was not a matter of urgency. He had done his very best to impress upon the Council his belief that it was a matter of very great urgency and importance to the Otago Harbour Board. He did not think he had said anything to lead any one to think to the contrary. What he had said was this: that the statement made by members of the Council—that there might be a possibility of such grave consequences as default being made unless the Bill was passed—had no ground whatever. There was no fear of anything of the sort, and he had said so. But he desired to repeat that it was of the utmost importance, as the Hon. Mr. Bonar had said, that some provision, whether by this Bill or by a local Bill, should be made this session, and for this reason: that, although there was no urgency for the Bill so far as the payment of interest was concerned, yet for other purposes—for the purpose of providing funds that were absolutely and urgently required to carry on and to maintain necessary works, such as keeping the channel open—it was necessary that provision should be made. He was now saying exactly what he had said a little time ago, and should be sorry if the Council misunderstood him; but he felt

Hon. Mr. Montgomery

quite certain that Mr. Shrimski was the only member who had misunderstood him.

The Hon. Mr. SHRIMSKI said the honourable gentleman ought not to impute motives to him. The honourable gentleman had distinctly stated that there was no urgency for the Act, as many honourable members present could bear out. If that honourable gentleman, after twenty years of public life, as he (Mr. Shrimski) had had, could stand up with the same reputation for truthfulness, he might then allow the honourable gentleman to dictate to him or to lecture him in the manner he had just attempted to do.

The Hon. Mr. BOLT said the explanation made by the Hon. Mr. Shrimski was rather misleading. What the Hon. Mr. MacGregor had stated was that it was not urgent in the sense of being necessary to enable the Harbour Board to meet immediately its obligations—that there was no urgency in the sense that if this Bill were not passed the Board would be likely to make default; but that it was a question of great urgency, after all, with respect to the conduct of the Board's affairs was unquestionable. The Harbour Board and the citizens of Dunedin generally thought it an exceedingly urgent matter. He had himself had telegrams from members of the Board during the day regarding it, and for the last six months they had had meetings of the Chamber of Commerce,—conferences between the Chamber and the Harbour Board,—with reference to the matter in question, and the citizens generally had been taking an interest in the matter and endeavouring to devise some scheme which would assist the Harbour Board. There was no question that just now the Harbour Board was very much pressed for want of revenue, and that it was of the greatest importance that the Council should pass the Bill this session. He would suggest that a small Bill, simply amending the Otago Harbour Board Empowering Act of 1882, should be telegraphed down to Dunedin, so that it might be advertised in the next day's paper, and that they should get it introduced and dealt with during the present session.

The Hon. Mr. STEVENS said, as Chairman of the Committee which had dealt with the Bill, it might be as well to say a word or two on the subject. The term "urgency" which had been used by some honourable members—by himself among the number—during the afternoon was not in any way intended to convey the impression that the Board was going to make default if it did not get the money; but the needs of the Board were such that a considerable sum—estimated at £4,000 a year—additional was required to be obtained during the current financial year; otherwise, he understood distinctly from the Chairman of the Board, the Board would not be in a position efficiently to carry out its functions, and therefore the port would be likely to suffer. He believed that was the impression which was generally conveyed to the members of the Committee. His impression, from what the Chairman had said, was that, although the Board preferred the *ad valorem* system, so

long as the means of getting the necessary funds were supplied, there would be a fair amount of satisfaction whatever course was taken. He thought they were in very considerable difficulty at the present juncture, for, in the view of the Hon. the Speaker, if they passed the clause in the present Act it would be a highly-objectionable and inconvenient practice. But he understood that the ruling was that it was in their power to do so. For his part, he considered the urgency of the case was such that, though it was inconvenient, and thought, perhaps, more or less serious consequences might follow, nevertheless, in a case of this kind, seeing that they had the power, he thought it desirable the Council should pass the clause. If this was not done there was no doubt very serious consequences would occur to the port; and, seeing that the Council had been declared to have the power, he would not be prepared to accept the responsibility of failing to give the necessary supplies to the Board during the current financial year. In view of the strong expression of opinion from the Hon. the Speaker, and from other honourable members, he thought it would be desirable that they should come to a clear understanding respecting their Standing Orders, and provide that, where it would be inconvenient and objectionable to admit clauses into a Bill, the Council should not have the power of doing so. He was inclined to urge upon the Council that at the earliest possible moment some settlement of the question should be arrived at.

Motion agreed to.

The Council adjourned at five o'clock p.m.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.

Friday, 14th September, 1894.

Third Reading—Imported Fruit—Taranaki Rates—Waipahi-Heriotburn Railway—Te Aro-Newtown Railway—Addison's Flat—Licensing Bill—Hikurangi-Kawakawa Railway—Makohine Viaduct—Dargaville—Opunake Telegraph—Government Railways Bill—W. N. Cathro—North Island Telegraph Line—Hikurangi Workmen—Adjournment—Harbour and Education Reserves Bill—Inspection of Machinery Bill—Mining Districts Land Occupation Bill—Government Advances to Settlers Bill.

Mr. SPEAKER took the chair at half-past two o'clock.

PRAYERS.

THIRD READING.

Hastings Borough Loan Validation and Empowering Bill.

IMPORTED FRUIT.

Mr. MILLS asked the Colonial Treasurer, Will he ascertain from the Customs Department if some better and quicker method cannot be adopted for inspecting, passing, and giving delivery of imported fruit on its arrival in Wellington? The custom at present was to take the fruit out of the cases and weigh it. He had seen a number of the cases weighed,

and the average came out so near that he thought the department might arrange to take them at a given weight, and thus save taking out cherries and fruit of that nature. He supposed they would still have to take out apples, on account of inspecting the fruit for codlin-moth.

Mr. WARD said, unfortunately for the honourable gentleman, there had been no complaints made to the department in reference to this matter. He might say that the utmost despatch was given in passing delivery of imported fruit. He was informed that the department could not see how there could be greater despatch if a proper examination was to be made with the view of guarding against the importation of fruit with codlin-moth; but if there were any grounds for complaint, and the honourable gentleman would communicate with him, he would be glad to have inquiry made into the matter.

LOCAL BODIES' ASSESSMENTS.

Major STEWARD asked the Colonial Treasurer,—(1.) Whether he is aware that a circular letter has been sent by the Commissioner of Taxes to the local governing bodies asking them to instruct their valuers, when making assessments under "The Rating Act, 1893," to give the unimproved value as well as the value of the land including improvements? (2.) If so, whether, seeing that up to the present the valuers have only been required to assess upon one basis, and that to fulfil the requirements of the circular will necessarily involve additional cost, the Government will be prepared to refund such additional cost to the local governing bodies? He had been induced to ask this question in consequence of the receipt from the Clerk of the County Council of Waitaki, Mr. Martin, of the following letter:—

"8th September, 1894.

"DEAR SIR,—The Council is in receipt of a circular letter from the Commissioner of Taxes asking, *inter alia*, that instructions be given to the county valuers, when making the assessments under 'The Rating Act, 1893,' to give the unimproved values as well as the value of the land including improvements.

"Of course you are aware that local bodies rate on the values including improvements, the improvement value not being required for county purposes (at least, for the present); but to obtain the desired information asked by the Commissioner will entail a considerable amount of extra work on the valuers, and, consequently, at a greater cost.

"The Chairman has directed me to write you in this matter, and to request that you will use your best endeavours with the Government in order that they may agree to pay a fair proportion of the cost, the Council being of opinion that it is unfair on the part of the Government to obtain the information without contributing to the cost.—I am, &c.,

"JAMES MARTIN, County Clerk."

Mr. WARD said the circular had evidently been misinterpreted by the local bodies to

Mr. Mills

whom the honourable gentleman referred. The circular sent out had asked if certain local bodies were willing to show the value of the improvements separately. There was nothing compulsory about it. The information was sought by the Taxing Department for the purpose of collecting information to bring under his own notice during the recess in connection with the administration of the department. If the local bodies could furnish the information it would be useful to the department, but there was nothing compulsory about it.

TARANAKI RATES.

Mr. E. M. SMITH asked the Minister of Lands, if he will direct the Lands Department in Taranaki to supply the local bodies with a return of all land sold or leased during the quarter, so that they may be enabled to place the names of the real holders of the land on the rate-roll, and collect the rates without delay? He had been induced to put the question, knowing that the Minister was very desirous of rendering all possible assistance to the local bodies. It was very necessary that the bodies should know who became possessed of the land, in order that their names might be put on the roll, and the rates collected. In his district there was great delay through the local bodies not knowing who was possessed of all the land.

Mr. J. MCKENZIE did not think it desirable that the officers of the department in the various districts should be called upon to give such a return; but he would give instructions that, on application being made by the local bodies to the District Land Offices, the request should be complied with. The application should come first from the local bodies.

WAIPAHI-HERIOTBURN RAILWAY.

Mr. LARNACH asked the Government, Whether arrangements will be made to cause a survey to be carried out during the recess for an extension of the Waipahi-Heriotburn Railway to Roxburgh?

Mr. SEDDON said the reply from the department was as follows:—

"No trial surveys have been made for an extension of the Waipahi-Heriotburn Railway from the present terminus at Heriot to Roxburgh, a distance of about thirty miles, but the country is rather rough, being cut up by ridges and gullies, over which the line will have to be taken, necessitating somewhat steep gradients and heavy earthworks in the formation of the railway, as well as a large amount of work in explorations and surveys required to obtain the most favourable line for the construction of the railway. The estimated probable cost of making the surveys for the location of the line of railway, and preparing plans, is £1,200."

That was the reply forwarded to him, and he would only say that the Government would take the matter into consideration.

TE ARO-NEWTOWN RAILWAY.

Dr. NEWMAN asked the Minister for Public Works, if he will place on the estimates a sum of money to complete a detailed survey for the

extension of the railway from Te Aro to Newtown? About two years ago a general survey of the extension of the line had been made from Te Aro towards Newtown, and at that time the amount required for purchase and compensation would have been comparatively small. Traffic was increasing very much, and the locality in question was becoming a populous part of the city, and it would therefore be a good thing if the line were laid off and the land taken during the recess. He would point out that the sections marked out for the proposed site of the station were not built over, and it would be cheaper to buy the land now than to wait for two or three years. He would ask the Government to take authority for the necessary amount under the public-works estimates.

Mr. SEDDON said the Government did not see their way to take any further action in this matter, after what had been done by the Wellington members in regard to the Te Aro goods-station. Subsequently to their action in this respect the members for the city, who opposed the Government in that matter, had been returned by the people, and that must be taken as being an indorsement of their action by the people of Wellington. He would also say that money spent in completing the Eketahuna-Woodville connection would be much better spent in the interests of the people of Wellington and of the colony than money spent in doing anything in respect of the extension referred to in the question.

ADDISON'S FLAT.

Mr. O'REGAN asked the Minister of Mines, —(1.) If he will cause inquiry to be made as to the gold-bearing strata of Addison's Flat, with a view to ascertaining the practicability of working them on an extensive scale? (2.) Is he aware that the cost of bringing in a permanent water-supply at Addison's has been estimated by an expert at £17,000, and not at £100,000 as has been erroneously stated? This was a question of considerable moment to the portion of the colony to which it referred. The auriferous qualities and payable nature of the ground at Addison's Flat were admitted on all sides, and something should be done to develop it. He hoped, therefore, the Premier would give him a satisfactory answer.

Mr. SEDDON said inquiries would be made as to the extent of the gold-bearing strata. No doubt there had been in the past a very heavy yield of gold, and from a geological point of view the land was worth inquiring into and reporting on. As regarded the supply of water, a large and permanent supply could only be obtained from the rivers and streams at high levels. As no surveys had been made of a line of race, it was difficult to understand how the estimates of the expert referred to had been obtained. Judging, however, from the distance of the source of supply, and the broken nature of the country, £17,000 would not be nearly enough to provide a sufficient supply of water to enable the whole field to be worked. In connection with water-races that had been

constructed, such as the Argyle Race, that had been handed over to the local authorities, which from time to time had asked for further assistance, and it had not been at all a success. In view of that experiment being a failure, the Government would have to be very careful before they went into any further expenditure in connection with water-races. However, the fullest information would be obtained, and later on he might give the honourable gentleman the views of the Government on the question. Being a West Coast matter, he need scarcely say that it would not be lost sight of.

LICENSING BILL.

Mr. WILSON asked the Premier, If he will cause provision to be inserted in the Licensing Bill so that no licensed person shall be permitted to remove to new premises? Under the Bill of last year a licensee could apply for his license to be taken from one township to another, which might be a hundred miles distant. He did not think this had been anticipated, and he therefore put the question.

Mr. SEDDON said there was no doubt the law at present permitted a removal to take place, as mentioned by the honourable gentleman. When the electoral boundaries were made the boundaries of the licensing districts, there ought to have been provision in the Act to prevent the removal of one license to premises in an adjoining district; but that was not done. Discretionary power, however, was left in the hands of the Committee, and in the case in point he hoped the Committee would exercise that power. The Government had placed themselves in communication on the subject when the matter was brought under their notice. The matter was provided for in the Bill now before the House.

HIKURANGI-KAWAKAWA RAILWAY.

Mr. HOUSTON asked the Minister for Public Works, If he will provide a sum to extend the railway from Hikurangi to meet the Kawakawa-Opua line, and thus provide work for those requiring it in that district? He did not think it was necessary for him to dilate on the subject. The Premier was well acquainted with the district, having had several painful experiences in travelling over it in days gone by, and knew the very great importance of the district. He hoped for a favourable answer.

Mr. SEDDON said the Government would consider the matter. He might say that something like £90,000 had been spent on the Kawakawa Railway, and it was not paying anything like interest on the cost of construction, or even working-expenses, owing to the stoppage of the coal-mine. The railway had been extended to Hikurangi, and was now being taken beyond. The gap between Hikurangi and Kawakawa was therefore narrowed to some extent. Inquiry would be made, and, though he did not think the Government would be able to make an appropriation for it this session, still there might be later on a necessity for something being done.

MAKOHINE VIADUCT.

Mr. STEVENS asked the Minister for Public Works, Whether it is the intention of the Government to let by contract the construction of the Makohine Viaduct, on the North Island Main Trunk Railway? If so, when do they purpose inviting tenders for the construction of the work? A considerable number of miles of railway had been constructed north of the proposed viaduct, and if the viaduct was not constructed within some reasonable time considerable loss must accrue to the Government, inasmuch as the line which was already made must be kept in repair, whether it was being used for traffic or not. Such being the case, the construction of the viaduct would be a great advantage not only to the department but to the whole district, inasmuch as that was the end of a line which would tap one of the finest blocks of Government land in the market, and the timber taken from it alone would warrant pushing on the construction of the viaduct.

Mr. SEDDON said it was unnecessary for him to inform the honourable gentleman that the money available for the North Island Main Trunk Railway was somewhat limited: in fact, it was getting gradually less every year. The matter would be considered when dealing with the public-works estimates. The Government were not in a position to tell the honourable gentleman what allocation would be made of the small balance of money left over for the construction of the railway. There was a general feeling in the House that the Government should not go in for further borrowing. He was afraid the North Island Main Trunk Railway would not be done unless there was some change in that respect.

DARGAVILLE-OPUNAKE TELEGRAPH.

Mr. HOUSTON asked the Postmaster-General,—(1.) What steps, if any, have been taken to extend the telegraph-line from Dargaville to Opunake, as promised last session? (2.) If nothing has been done in this matter, when will the work be undertaken?

Mr. WARD said this was provided for in this year's estimates. It had been held over since the promise was made owing to the want of the necessary appropriation for it.

GOVERNMENT RAILWAYS BILL.

Major STEWARD asked the Premier, Whether the provision made in the Railways Bill for the preservation to the Commissioners of all rights and privileges as Civil servants (if originally in the Civil Service) extends to all subordinate railway officers; and, if the Bill as at present worded does not effect this, whether, on the recomittal, he will propose or accept a new clause making the necessary provision by securing that service under the Railway Commissioners shall count as service as Civil servants? He put the question in consequence of the receipt of a telegram from an officer of the railway service, who was anxious to know the position of officers under the Bill that was passing the House. As he understood the

clause, those of the Commissioners who were Civil servants prior to their appointment as Commissioners were secured the reversion to their status as Civil servants, but it was not clear to the mind of the subordinate officers as to whether the Act covered their case also. The point was in the last few words of the question, as to whether service under the Commissioners would count as unbroken service in the Civil Service.

3.0. Mr. SEDDON said the provision made in the Railways Bill at present before the House extended to subordinate railway officers as well as the Commissioners. If the matter required to be made clear, however, that would be done. He desired to take this opportunity of removing an erroneous impression that had arisen owing to his reply given to the question put by the honourable member for Inangahua, as to whether free passes would be given to railway servants on holidays, and if those passes would be continued to them when travelling on days outside of leave-days. There would not be any further concession in that direction, and, as there was such an impression, he desired to remove it.

Major STEWARD said the reply, so far, was quite satisfactory, but there were a number of officers who were anxious to get the information, and he would be glad if the Minister would kindly make it quite clear as to whether the service of railway employés under the Commissioners would count as part of their service as Civil servants.

Mr. SEDDON said it was not intended, in drafting the Bill, that there should be any break owing to the change, and, if the matter was not clear, he would see that it was made so.

W. N. CATHRO.

Mr. J. W. KELLY asked the Minister of Justice, If his attention has been drawn to an alleged misappropriation of funds by W. N. Cathro, solicitor, Rangiora, the said funds belonging to one Thomas R. Dillon? If so, will the Minister at once take steps to have an inquiry made, with a view of eliciting the facts of the case; and, if the charge is substantiated, will he take the necessary steps to have the name of the said W. N. Cathro removed from the roll of solicitors and barristers practising in the colony?

Mr. SEDDON, on behalf of the Minister of Justice, said that the Justice Department knew nothing of the case. On the facts as stated there were no grounds for interference by the Government. It was the function of the Law Society to take the steps necessary to purge the roll of solicitors when occasion arose.

Mr. GUINNESS asked if that was what the Justice Department said.

Mr. SEDDON said, Yes. He thought, himself, that, as a matter of honour was at stake, the Law Society would take immediate steps.

Mr. J. W. KELLY said it had never been brought under their notice.

Mr. SEDDON said, that being the case, they could not be blamed, but if this case did exist

both the Government and Law Society ought to take action.

Mr. J. W. KELLY said he had forwarded particulars to the Justice Department on the previous day.

NORTH ISLAND TELEGRAPH-LINE.

Mr. E. M. SMITH asked the Postmaster-General, if he remembers promising last session to have a report on the question of carrying the telegraph-line up the west coast of the North Island? If so, is the said report ready, and when will the line be constructed as far as the settled and mining district of Mokau? This was a most important question, and one that had been asked session after session. Not long ago the department promised to construct this line: and, in fact, they said it was their anxious desire to carry the telegraph-line up the west coast, so that they could have two strings to their bow in the event of disarrangement on the east coast. The Minister of Lands had cleared the road for a long distance, and there was now no difficulty in constructing the line. He hoped, as the question had been so long before the department, that a report would be obtained, and that that report would be satisfactory.

Mr. WARD quite agreed with the honourable gentleman that it was desirable to have two strings to a bow, but, if one string was a very bad one, he thought that then it would be more desirable to have nothing to do with it. The position of this matter was as stated by the honourable member, and the construction of the line would give two strings to the bow, but it would cost £1,500. There would be a loss on it of something like £100 a year. He would, however, make a fair offer to the honourable gentleman in order to compromise the matter. If the sum of £384 was contributed locally the line would be proceeded with at once, and that would mean an expenditure on the part of the colony of £1,122. It would be a very expensive line, and his reply would indicate how it could be obtained.

HIKURANGI WORKMEN.

Mr. THOMPSON asked the Minister of Labour, Whether it is true that the unemployed workmen sent from Christchurch to Hikurangi have been guaranteed work for a fixed period? If so, will the same privilege be extended to local workmen? This question was not so large a one, perhaps, or of such an important character, as the question he had asked on the previous day. He wished to explain the very peculiar circumstances that had taken place lately in the North of Auckland. There the unemployed had been called upon to accept work under conditions that would be humiliating and degrading to any working-man who had any self-respect. The conditions were such that no man would accept them unless he was reduced to the position of a pauper. The result was that many of the working-men of the district had been prevented from getting work. Last week a contingent of workmen who, he understood, were the constituents of the Minister of Labour had been

sent up to the district to work. He had been informed that these men had been given employment under very favourable conditions, and that they had been guaranteed work for a fixed period of time, and at rates of wages beyond what was offered to other men. He was not prepared to prove that this was correct, and as the representative of the unemployed in the North he would put it to the Minister that the local men should have equal rights and privileges with men sent from any other part of the colony. He did not raise any objection to men being sent from any part of the colony to work there, so long as they were given equal conditions, and were treated alike, but he protested against his constituents being kept out of work while workmen were brought from other parts of the colony. In this case, if the Minister of Labour would condescend to give him a civil answer—

Mr. SPEAKER did not think the honourable member should make any reflection of that kind in asking a question.

Mr. THOMPSON would withdraw the expression if it were considered a reflection; but he did hope that the Minister would give him a satisfactory answer; otherwise, of course, he would be prepared to renew the question in some form or another day after day until he did receive a satisfactory answer. He had no wish to say anything to provoke discussion in this matter; he simply wanted an assurance from the Minister that he had not used the Department of Labour so as to prejudice the working-men in his (Mr. Thompson's) district. If the honourable gentleman explained that satisfactorily he would be satisfied.

Mr. REEVES could assure the honourable gentleman that the Department of Labour had not been used so as to prejudice the working-men in his district or in any other district. He would endeavour, as he had endeavoured on the previous day, to be quite civil and courteous to the honourable member. It was true that nineteen men had been sent up there from Christchurch, and there were a number of the men now on the work. The number was fifty—namely, nineteen from the South and thirty-one from the district. It was also true that the men brought up from the South were guaranteed work for a certain time, but not for a long period. As they had been taken from home, and had to pay the cost of going there, and of going back if they went back, it would not have been reasonable to have taken them all the way simply for a few days' work. They had been given work for three months, which was, he thought, not an unreasonable time, considering the circumstances. With regard to the local men, no guarantee, of course, of a long period of work was ever given. He was informed that the work given to the local men would last at least three months, and after the three months were up the southern men would have simply to take their chance with the rest.

ADJOURNMENT.

Mr. J. W. KELLY moved the adjournment of the House in order to bring before the atten-

tion of members and Ministers a very important matter, upon which he had asked a question that day. He regretted to say that the department had answered that question in a very unsatisfactory manner. The question was in reference to Mr. Cathro, a solicitor residing at Rangiora, and in regard to his conduct respecting trust moneys placed in his hands for collection. He would ask honourable members to give him their attention while he stated the facts in connection with the matter. He understood the honourable member for Wellington City (Mr. Bell) held very strong feelings on this matter, and perhaps he would give him his particular attention.

Mr. BELL.—Why do you say I have strong feeling?

Mr. J. W. KELLY said the facts were that a person named Dillon some time ago was working for a contractor named Lace, in the Oxford Bush, who had a contract for cutting a certain quantity of railway sleepers; but he, unfortunately, got into financial difficulties, and was unable to pay his men their wages. Dillon's wages at this time amounted to something like £20, and he was compelled to take steps under the Workmen's Wages Act to secure this amount. He summoned the contractor, and received a verdict in the Rangiora Court for the amount of wages due to him. Between the date of receiving the verdict and the date of the money being paid into Court by the Railway Commissioners Dillon was compelled to leave the district and go to Wellington in search of employment. He travelled all the way from Wellington to Hawke's Bay and back in search of work, and was unable to obtain one day's work during the whole of that time. Upon his arrival in Wellington, being an old friend, he naturally looked him (Mr. Kelly) up, being in destitute circumstances. He (Mr. Kelly) waited on the Commissioners, and ascertained that this money was lying in the Court at Rangiora. He communicated first with the Clerk of the Court, asking him to forward the money. After a few days' delay Dillon began to get impatient, and, thinking the matter might be hastened, he wrote again to the Clerk authorising him to pay the money over to Mr. Cathro, with a view of getting the money sent to him much quicker, as he thought. Mr. Cathro got the money from the Court all right, and was entitled to hand the money over to Dillon, less his charges in connection with the same. He (Mr. Kelly) communicated with Mr. Cathro when he knew he had got the money from the Court, urging him to send the money at once, as Dillon was utterly destitute; but the House would judge of his surprise when three days afterwards Mr. Cathro, instead of sending the money, sent the following letter, which, for cool unvarnished effrontery, could not be equalled, he ventured to say, in the whole colony.

Mr. TANNER.—In the profession, you mean?

Mr. J. W. KELLY said, Yes. Here was the letter:—

Mr. J. W. Kelly

"Rangiora, 8th September, 1894.

"DEAR SIR,—As I have purchased from Mr. John Dowdale and W. R. Fisher, of Oxford, the debts owing by you to them, amounting respectively to £17 11s. 9d. and £2 8s. 10d., and these sums amounting altogether to more than the amount in my hands, I have no money to forward to you. As, however, I have taken Messrs. Dowdale and Fisher's word that their claims are correct, I shall be glad if you will inform me whether they are or not.—Yours truly,

"W. N. CATHRO.

"Mr. T. K. Dillon, care of J. W. Kelly, Esq., M.H.R."

Now, honourable members would be very much astonished when he informed them that one of the accounts amounted to £17 11s. 9d., said to be owing to a publican, and he supposed, in all probability, for drinks. However, he had a further communication on the matter, which he would read a little further on, to throw a little more daylight into the transactions of this gentleman. Upon receiving this letter he took legal advice in Wellington as to the position of Mr. Cathro, and he was informed that he had acted illegally in this matter, and could be compelled to refund this money. He (Mr. Kelly) immediately wired to Mr. Cathro, informing him that if the money was not paid to Dillon by Thursday—that was, the previous day—he would at once take steps to have affidavits sworn in the Supreme Court against him in this matter. He received the following letter from Mr. Cathro, which would show how good that gentleman was at the game of bluff:—

"Rangiora, 12th September, 1894.

"DEAR SIR,—Re Dillon: I am in receipt of your telegram threatening proceedings against me herein. I have no objection whatever. As, however, business will take me to Wanganui all next week, I will endeavour to see you on my return and satisfy you about the matter.—Yours truly,

"W. N. CATHRO.

"J. W. Kelly, Esq., M.H.R., Wellington."

In the letter he said he would see him (Mr. Kelly) on his—Cathro's—return from Wanganui. Mr. Cathro did not think it worth his while to see him on his arrival in Wellington, but postponed it till his return from Wanganui: he might, for all he knew to the contrary, be going to Hongkong. In fairness to Mr. Cathro, he again wired to him the previous day that he had given notice of a question which would come on to-day, and if a proper settlement were arrived at before twelve o'clock he would withdraw the question, but, if not, he would have it threshed out, and demand that proceedings be taken to have his name struck off the rolls.

Mr. BELL.—Is not that "bluff"?

Mr. J. W. KELLY said it was high time some one tried to bluff a solicitor, when he in the most deliberate manner had robbed a working-man of his money. Now, to his great surprise, he also received a letter from Dillon, to whom the money belonged, dated the 12th September; and he would read it:—

"Christchurch, 12th September, 1894.

"DEAR SIR,—I have interviewed Mr. John Dowdale this day, and he emphatically denies having sold Mr. Cathro any book debts of mine.

"THOS. R. DILLON.

"Mr. J. W. Kelly."

Now, here was a fine state of affairs. There was no doubt whatever, from what he knew of the circumstances, that the statement of Mr. Cathro was entirely false so far as the purchasing of these debts was concerned, and Dillon altogether denied the correctness of the account which Mr. Cathro said he had purchased from the publican. He had now stated the facts in this case fully, and he asked this: Was it right that a member of the legal profession should take advantage of a working-man who had intrusted him with his business, and who had been betrayed in this manner? Here was a man utterly destitute at the present moment, who was probably swaggling about Canterbury looking for work, while this lawyer had nearly £20 in his hands belonging to him, and of which he could not get a farthing. This lawyer had pretended to have paid the debts of Dillon, which he was assured by the highest legal authority in Wellington was entirely illegal, having been done without Dillon's knowledge or consent, and as long as he had the honour of a place in the House he considered it to be his duty to guard the rights of any working-man who had been robbed in this way. The action of Mr. Cathro was a downright disgrace to him, and to the profession of which he was a member, and he hoped the Ministry, after having had these facts laid before them—facts which could be substantiated—would take steps to move the Canterbury Law Society in the matter.

Mr. BELL said he was quite ignorant of any of the facts of this matter, but he knew Mr. Cathro.

Mr. J. W. KELLY.—So does Dillon.

Mr. BELL said the honourable gentleman had better hear him out. He had made a very grave attack. He had used language which would require outside that House very serious justification, and he thought the honourable gentleman had better hear him out. He knew this gentleman. He had not seen him for, he thought, about four or five years; but he was for a long time in his (Mr. Bell's) employment as a managing clerk in his office. He had lived at Wanganui before. He was a man who in every sense of the word bore a very high character, and while he was in his employment was intrusted in one capacity with very considerable sums of money, and there never was the slightest suggestion—there was no ground of suggesting in any way—that he was a man who would be guilty of any such acts as embezzling a client's money.

Mr. J. W. KELLY.—Oh, oh!

Mr. BELL said if the honourable gentleman would hear him out he would come to the point. What he said, first of all, was this: that the gentleman—and he called him a gentleman, because he was entitled to that designation as far as his experience of him had

gone—the gentleman to whom such language had been applied from the floor of the House was a gentleman of whom it was almost inconceivable to him that he should have been guilty of dishonourable conduct. As he said, he had lost sight of him for the last four or five years, though, so far as he had heard from other members of the profession, he had not been engaged in disreputable practices. He knew no more than that. If what the honourable gentleman had said was correct—and the honourable gentleman to a large extent was speaking, of course, only from report—

Mr. J. W. KELLY.—Not at all. I have stated the facts.

Mr. BELL thought the honourable gentleman had better hear him. He should not misrepresent him, he assured him. Upon one point the honourable gentleman spoke from his own knowledge, and upon one point only. He appeared, at the instance of this intimate personal friend, to have been aware that the instructions sent to Mr. Cathro were to receive the money on behalf of Mr. Dillon. He (Mr. Bell) must admit that if Mr. Cathro so received the money the probability was that in law he was not entitled to use it, even if Dillon were indebted to him, in payment of a debt to him. He should say that would be his opinion; but if Dillon was indebted to Cathro—

Mr. J. W. KELLY.—No, no.

Mr. BELL said that if he was—and upon that point it was quite impossible for the honourable gentleman to speak, as he had done, in a tone of absolute certainty—Cathro on the one hand appeared to have said distinctly, "I have purchased debts due by you to other persons." He (Mr. Bell) should gather that these debts had been purchased before, and not after, the receipt of the £15; but, if he had done so, it was not at all unnatural for a man to suppose he had a legal right to set one debt off against another, and he should be astonished if Dillon would not do the same. It was not dishonest if Dillon owed the money to Cathro directly, and Cathro then received money belonging to Dillon—it might be illegal, but it was not a dishonest thing to set off one sum against the other. That was the position as it might have presented itself to Cathro, and, for aught he (Mr. Bell) knew, that was the position that really existed. The position, however, was this: that Mr. Cathro, when told by the honourable gentleman that he was going to move to have him struck off the roll, said, "By all means. I am perfectly prepared to meet you there." What, then, did the honourable gentleman do? He changed his front, and said, "I have a question to put on the Order Paper, and if you do not pay this money I will use language against you on the floor of the House which will make you sorry you ever had any dealings with me or my friend." He (Mr. Bell) appealed to Mr. Speaker—he appealed to honourable gentlemen on both sides of the House—he appealed to honourable members sitting near the honourable gentleman—if that was what they should

allow in that House. What the honourable gentleman had said about righting a wrong was just and true; what he had said about speaking up for a man who was oppressed by another was just; but that an honourable member should telegraph to another man—he did not care who he was, or if he was the greatest villain on the face of the earth—and say, “Pay up, or I will use my privilege as a member of the House, and give you the rough side of my tongue under cover of my privilege”—to do that was to misuse the privilege which the honourable member had on the floor of the House, and the effect of it would be, if it were pursued, to degrade that House, and to degrade the members of the House. His (Mr. Bell's) complaint was this: He knew, as he had said, nothing of the facts; but the Courts were open; the honourable member himself had had advice. He himself said, “If you don't pay, I will put the law in motion,” as any man could by a mere summary process of the Supreme Court; and he threatened him first with that. Then he said, “I have got a bigger weapon than that. I can catch you where you cannot reply to me; I can use my place in the House to injure and insult you”—he did use the language of insult—“I can use my privilege to abuse and insult you where you cannot reply to me; I have the whip-hand of you there, and, by Heaven, I will use it.”

330. He hoped that this would not be established as a precedent. They did not know—in the nature of things could not know—whether this man had or had not done wrong. If he had, the course was open to the aggrieved party of having it inquired into by simply sending a letter to the Law Society of the district. There was no trouble about the matter at all. An application to any Judge of the Supreme Court would do it, and an action in the Magistrate's Court would do it: but, no, that would not give the honourable gentleman the chance of standing in Parliament in his friend's behalf to make personal and insulting remarks against a man who was unable to defend himself. He could not, in accordance with the usages of Parliament, nor would Mr. Speaker permit him to, use the language to characterize such conduct as it deserved.

Mr. PIRANI would like to say, with regard to the case of Mr. Cathro, that he had known that gentleman for many years. He was almost from his youth upwards in the employ of the late Mr. Ballance in Wanganui, in a confidential capacity, and he was always known there as an honest, straightforward man, in whom you could trust, and he was very much surprised indeed at these charges: indeed, he could hardly believe that, when all the circumstances of the case were brought out, the case would look as black as it was painted.

Mr. WILLIS thought it would be in place for him to offer a few remarks with regard to Mr. Cathro. He had known him from boyhood. He was in his (Mr. Willis's) employment for very many years in his early days, before he entered the law, and he was a hard-

working, honest, straightforward young fellow, whose acquaintance any one might be proud to have. He had known him till within the last few years, and he believed his conduct had uniformly been the same. He was quite satisfied in this matter there must have been some misunderstanding, and he thought it was only right, considering the way in which Mr. Cathro had been abused, that he should stand up and speak for him. All that he knew of him was to his credit.

Mr. MCGUIRE might mention that he had known this young man for many years—over twenty years at all events—and he had never, up to the present occasion, heard one word against him. He was a most industrious, hard-working young man, who had pushed himself along by force of character, and raised himself to become a solicitor and barrister of the Supreme Court.

Mr. G. HUTCHISON did not wish to say anything about Mr. Cathro at all, nor about the facts of the case. He wished to point out that if, in response to a telegram which was sent yesterday, the sum of £20 had been forwarded to an honourable gentleman, or his friend, this matter would not have been brought up. This was using the process of the House for a purpose for which it certainly was never intended, and yet that appeared to be the honourable gentleman's object in bringing the matter forward, even assuming the honourable gentleman's own statement of the facts was correct. He only desired to remark on that aspect of the case, which was an unfortunate one: that the House should be used as a means of collecting debts, and that statements should be made under cover of privilege which, if made outside the House, might subject the person making them to considerable penalties.

Mr. MEREDITH knew something of the circumstances of the case, although not acquainted with the whole of them. He knew that the man Dillon was one of the men referred to by the honourable member for Invercargill—one of the employes of Mr. Lace; that he was engaged in the execution of a sleeper contract; that Lace got into monetary difficulties, and that this particular man, in conjunction with a number of others, had a difficulty in getting the money that was due to him. And as Lace had money coming to him, he (Mr. Meredith) had to approach the Railway Commissioners, and also the Audit Department, with a view of endeavouring to secure under the Workmen's Wages Act the rights of the workmen referred to by the honourable member for Invercargill. There was some justification for the honourable member bringing the case under the notice of the House. It was clear that, not only in this particular instance, but in the case of other workmen connected with this particular sleeper contract, it was a case of fleecing the innocents. One-third of the total amount coming to these men had filtered away in the shape of legal expenses. He did not wish to associate the name of Mr. Cathro with this, because he was not in possession of specific

Mr. Bell

information to warrant him in doing so, and therefore he hesitated to speak with regard to that case. He had received a letter, and he understood the Minister of Labour had also received a letter bearing on the same subject. He showed the Minister the letter received by him (Mr. Meredith); it was from one of the mill-hands at Oxford, and in it the writer complained that, out of a sum of £17, something like £6 odd was deducted for legal expenses: so that this poor man, after working four or five months in the bush, and remaining out of his money for a couple of months, considered he had been badly treated. He considered that the honourable gentleman was justified in bringing the matter before the House that afternoon, and would receive the thanks of the workmen connected with this particular case.

Mr. THOMPSON did not rise for the purpose of taking part in the discussion on the matter brought up by the honourable member for Invercargill, but he wished to say a few words with reference to a question that he had on the Order Paper. For the last two years public works had been carried on in the Hikurangi district, and he had never yet found it necessary to bring up any grievance in connection with those works on the floor of the House, and he thought the Premier would bear him out when he said that on all occasions he supported the department in every way he could to assist in settling any grievance that cropped up, without reference to the House. But, unfortunately for the working-men in that district, a change had taken place. They had passed from under the control of the Premier, who was a practical man, and a man of his word, who knew how to treat working-men, and who had sympathy with them. So long as they were in his department grievances were settled in a satisfactory manner, and there was no necessity for bringing up the subject in the House. But, unfortunately, that state of things had passed away, and now they were under another king. Conditions had been imposed on those men recently of a most insulting and degrading character. These men were, perhaps, amongst the most self-reliant and independent men in the colony. They had never been accustomed to be treated or addressed as paupers, and therefore they had resented being treated in that way. They had appealed to him as their representative in the House, and they had forwarded to him a number of letters and telegrams; but, knowing that the matter was no longer within the control of the Premier, and that he was thrown into the hands of the Labour Department, he declined to approach the Minister of Labour, being well aware from past experience that he would not be received with civility or courtesy. Therefore that was his excuse and apology for bringing this particular grievance up in the House. To show honourable members how these men had been treated, he might mention that three or four days before he took action in the matter there were only seven local men employed on those railway-works, and now the

Minister informed him that there were thirty-one. Why the change? It was simply because the matter had been brought up in Parliament. He did not care what information the Minister might have received from the officers of his department. He might be misled by them; the Minister in this instance might not be so much to blame as his officers; but he (Mr. Thompson) said, no matter what information might have been supplied to the Minister by the officers of his department as to the distress existing in that district, he had most reliable information which satisfied him that for the last twenty-five years there had not been so much distress in that part of the colony as existed at the present day. If the same state of distress had existed in the South, or any other part of the colony, they would have had a howl from one end of the colony to the other, and petitions presented to the House, and public meetings held in all the large centres; but the men there had never been accustomed to approach the House, they never approached it until this year, and they would a great deal rather go into their wharves and die of starvation than be compelled to approach the Government as paupers. Therefore he was bound, as their representative, to see that these men got justice and fair-play. If a few days ago thirty-one men had been employed this grievance would never have been brought up in the House. There was no reason why these obnoxious conditions should have been imposed, except for the purpose of shutting out these men. When he explained to the House that one of these conditions was that the married men had not only to make a declaration that they had wives and families but that those wives and families were residing in the district, and when also he pointed out to the House that gum districts, where the men earned a living by digging gum, were unfit for women and children to live in,—that those unfortunate men were driven out to the gum-fields to eke out a living,—they would see that it was a hard thing to compel them to bring their wives and families to the district. If they did so, their children would be deprived of the opportunity of attending school, and would be deprived also of the comforts and necessities of life. Therefore these men were obliged to leave their homes and go a distance of probably thirty or forty miles away to the gum-fields in order to earn a living for their wives and families. Yet, as he pointed out, unless these men were willing to make a declaration not only that they had wives and families, but that their wives and families resided on the gumfields with them, they were refused work. Was that a fair position to place destitute men in? Would the Minister of Labour have imposed the same conditions upon his own constituents?

Mr. REEVES.—Yes.

Mr. THOMPSON asked if he shipped along with the men who had been sent to Hikurangi their wives and families. Had he carried out the same condition in their case and compelled them to bring their wives and families on to the ground, and placed them under the same con-

ditions as were placed on the local men? He had not. He did not object to any number of men being sent there from other districts. He did not care if the honourable gentleman sent five hundred men there, so long as he gave work to the destitute in the district on the same terms and conditions on which he gave work to others. That was his grievance. Now, with reference to another matter which took place the previous day, and which therefore he could not directly refer to to-day, he would only say this: This was the third Parliament in which he had had the honour to sit, and during the whole time that he had occupied a seat in the House he had never attacked any member of that or of previous Parliaments on account of his personal disabilities or infirmities. He could not speak more plainly than that. He referred honourable members to the records of Parliament to satisfy themselves upon this point. Neither directly nor indirectly had he ever referred in the remotest manner to the infirmities of any member during the whole time he had been in Parliament. Then, with reference to any charge that he had ever made against a Civil servant, he could say that he had never made a charge that he was not in a position to prove, and any charges he had made were made against the Administration. He had never made a personal charge against a Civil servant: and he did not act like his honourable friend opposite—he did not do so under the protection of the privileges of this House. He did it outside on the public platform, and he challenged any one to take up the question. He hoped, as long as he had the honour of representing any electorate in that House, that he would never make a charge in the House he was afraid to make outside of it. That was the position he took up. If he had a charge to make against any one he would not be found crawling behind the privileges of the House, but would make it outside the walls of Parliament as well as inside. Any one who said he had ever done anything other than that made a statement which was contrary to fact. He was sorry this had cropped up. Had the management of these works been in the hands of a different Minister Parliament would never have heard anything about it. But he hoped that in future there would be no favouritism shown. He hoped the Department of Labour would not be used for the special benefit of working-men of one constituency to the prejudice of those of another. All he asked for was that all the unemployed should be treated alike. If that were done he would have no cause to complain. He was precluded by the rules of the House from saying any more just then; but there were a number of men in his district whom he hoped would be treated just the same as the strangers were who had been brought there. He hoped they would get the same rates of pay for the work they did, and he ventured to say that if they did they would hold their own with the strangers who had been brought there. If these strangers were the same class of men as they had in the North—if they were industrious, strong, and honest workmen—he

Mr. Thompson

would be very glad to welcome them when he returned home, and if they were that class of men they were not likely to go back to the South again, but would most likely settle down and become permanent settlers. So far as his constituents were concerned, these men would be received in a friendly manner, and treated in no hostile spirit. He hoped that, in connection with any grievances or complaints that cropped up in future in connection with these works, whoever might be the Minister in charge of the works before whom he brought these grievances, he would be received with civility and courtesy, and that there would be no necessity to bring up those grievances on the floor of the House.

Mr. REEVES said whether the greater part of the address to which they had listened from the honourable gentleman had anything to do with the facts of the case honourable members were quite as well able to judge as he was, and he was prepared to leave it to their decision whether the honourable gentleman had made any fair case out against the Labour Department, the Government in general, or himself. He was also prepared to leave the matter to the judgment of the House without any apprehension of a hostile decision. First of all with regard to one statement made by the honourable gentleman which had appeared to turn upon the facts of the case: The honourable gentleman drew quite a roseate picture of the pleasant and harmonious way in which all matters connected with public works were carried on under the control of the Public Works Minister. Quite so; they did go on very smoothly; but the honourable gentleman went on to say that as soon as the management and control of that work came under the dreadful Labour Department, and that rude, and uncivil, and tyrannical Minister of Labour, it was quite different. Would it be news to the honourable gentleman that the works were still under the Public Works Department, in exactly the same way as they were in the past? The works were carried on and inspected, the men taken on, the work cut out, and the whole affair managed by the officers of the Public Works Department. Nothing was done by the Labour Department except the mere engagement of the men; but once they were engaged they came under the Public Works Department, and it was under that department that they were now working. And therefore any grievances or any dissatisfaction that might be felt was simply dissatisfaction with the Public Works Department, and not with him (Mr. Reeves) or his department. He had nothing to do with that.

Mr. THOMPSON.—Who refuses them the work?

Mr. REEVES said they were not refused work. The men about whom the honourable gentleman was speaking, and whose grievances he had narrated, had not been refused work, because they were on work now.

Mr. THOMPSON.—Since when?

Mr. REEVES.—The honourable gentleman had said it was about five days ago, that there

were only seven men at work there before that, and that thirty-one had been taken on simply because the matter had been brought up on the floor of the House. Would it be news to the honourable gentleman to learn that, out of thirty-one men taken on, there were nineteen taken on in the month of July, and the remaining twelve on the 1st September, some little time before the honourable gentleman brought up his grievance on the floor of the House? Nor were they taken on on account of any presentiment that there was going to be a row in the House, but because the department knew that there were men up there who wanted work, and there was work at that time to give them. That was all. It was really difficult for him to say much more about the address of the honourable gentleman, because he did not refer to what had happened up there. When he stated that the men were treated with insolence and rudeness, and were treated as though they were loafers and beggars, with suspicion, he could only say that for this tittle-tattle there was no foundation in fact. What were the facts? The men were asked certain reasonable questions, to which he knew there was no objection made in other districts, such as Canterbury, Otago, Wellington, and elsewhere. They were simply reasonable and necessary questions, and he did not believe any general objection to them was felt in the honourable member's district by those who had to apply for work. It was ludicrous to say that on account of those questions the men were afraid to apply for work, and to say that the men were treated insultingly and that they did not get the work they needed. At any rate, the men, whenever they had been offered work, seemed to have pocketed their pride and to have taken it, and were on the work now. He again reiterated that it was absolutely necessary for the Labour Department to ask reasonable questions, to take reasonable precautionary measures against imposture. His department had to deal with a large number of decent but unfortunate working-men, who had not committed any crime, and against whom no fault could be alleged. It was their misfortune and not their fault that they were out of work. But he was sorry to say that his department had to deal with a minority of a very different class of men, who could not be described in such favourable terms, and amongst them the Minister of Labour had to guard against a great deal of rank hypocrisy—men who would say that they were married when they were single men, or that they had large families when they had nothing of the kind, and who would reply that they had aged and infirm relatives dependent upon them when it was found that such was not the case. The experience of the Labour Department, and the experience of all such departments in other countries, told them that they would be obliged to adopt some such system as this, so as to be able to distinguish the false from the true. He denied that it was any insult to ask a man who was applying for work as a matter of relief whether he was married or single, whether he

had a large family or a small family, or even—the “crowning insult”—whether his family lived in the district or not. He knew of no rational, sensible man who considered he was insulted because he was asked whether his family lived in the district or elsewhere; and it was not reasonable to say that such a course was tyrannical or insulting, or that such questions would deter the working-man from coming to the department to apply for work. These were the honourable gentleman's charges with regard to this matter. But, with regard to his attacks upon himself (Mr. Reeves), he doubted whether they were worth replying to at all. The honourable gentleman stated that he was afraid to come to him—

Mr. THOMPSON.—I did not say that.

Mr. REEVES said the honourable gentleman said he feared to apply, because from past experience he knew that he would not be treated with courtesy.

Mr. THOMPSON.—I never said that I was afraid to apply.

Mr. REEVES said, Well, then, it was that the honourable gentleman would not apply because he knew he would not be met with civility. What did that mean? That he feared that he would be met with insult.

Mr. THOMPSON.—No.

Mr. REEVES did not know, then, what it meant. The honourable gentleman had said, if he wished to apply to the Minister in charge of the Labour Department, he was afraid to lay the facts before him, because he believed he would be met with insult and incivility. If it did not mean that, he did not know the English language. He had to state positively to the House that he had never treated the honourable gentleman with incivility when he came to him on public business, and he was prepared, if necessary, to take his oath to that effect. As head of the Labour Department, he could say that the honourable gentleman had never shown any hesitation, either in the lobbies or elsewhere, in approaching him. He had always been on speaking terms with the honourable gentleman, and had never noticed any hesitation on the honourable gentleman's part in approaching him on public business. He remembered distinctly on one occasion that the honourable gentleman waited upon him in Auckland, and had a conversation with him in regard to the Native schools in his district, which were to be handed over to the Board, and they went on and had a conversation about the distress existing among the working-men, particularly in his part of the colony. The honourable gentleman was not treated on that occasion with any kind of incivility, or with anything but perfect courtesy, which any Minister should use to a member of Parliament who waited upon him on public business. He had always shown the honourable gentleman courtesy, and, in spite of what the honourable gentleman had said that afternoon, he was quite prepared to receive him with courtesy and civility in the future. He was perfectly willing to bury the hatchet with any man who cared to bury it with him. He

did not bear malice or entertain grudges because he happened to have a brush with an honourable member in the course of debate.

Mr. E. M. SMITH would not have risen in his place but for the speech of the honourable member for Invercargill. He never liked to speak of any man, or on any subject, simply by exercise of his privilege in the House. He believed in doing inside the House only what he was not afraid to do outside the House. When these debates came up they had to listen first to one side of the question and then to the other side of the question. As one knowing nothing of the case referred to by the honourable member, he should say that this was a good young man while he was in the printing-office, but who, as soon as he became mixed up with the lawyers, went wrong. Of course, he did not know whether this was the result of the training he got in one honourable gentleman's office. He rose to make some

4.0. remarks on the reply which he had received from the Minister as to an extension of the telephone or telegraph service in his district. Telephonic communication between New Plymouth and Mokau had been promised year in and year out. What was the statement of the Colonial Treasurer? Last session, when the honourable gentleman promised to get a report on this matter, the people naturally thought he was going to send an officer of the department over the line to ascertain the facts. The Minister stated in his reply that the work would cost about £1,500 to construct; and then he asked the people to give a guarantee of £300. A short time ago a steamer was wrecked on the Mokau bar, and the result was, there being no telegraphic communication, assistance could not be given to the vessel for two or three days. Besides that, there was practically no road; you had to go two or three miles along the beach over boulders, and also round a dangerous zigzag path. When people were asked about opening up trade with that district, they pointed out that there was no signal-man there, no telephones, no means of ascertaining whether the bar was fit to cross or otherwise. These were the drawbacks to the progress of the district. If the honourable gentleman had the telephone constructed from the junction at the railway-station, through Urenui, Waihi, and other townships, on to Mokau, it would be money well spent. These were settled districts. They were places where people came in from the side-roads and by-roads to get their stores and letters. There were butter-factories here and there along the line. Unless the Government did something in this matter they would not be assisting the settlers in the manner they ought to do. He did not mean to say anything against the honourable gentleman, because he knew that, as Colonial Treasurer, he had no time to devote to this question. He had been solely guided by his officers; and, if they allowed those officers to go on in the way they were doing, the district would remain twenty years behind what it ought to be. It was only by honourable members asking questions in the House that

they could ever hope to obtain these works. As the Postal and Telegraph Department was making a handsome profit, he thought they should in this particular case, where settlements were springing up all along the line between New Plymouth and Auckland, spend some money there. That money would not only be spent in the district through which it passed, but it would, in a very short time, lead to communication with Auckland. There were numbers of special settlements springing up all through the country. He knew case after case where women in the bush had died because no medical man could be summoned within a reasonable time to their assistance. If this telephonic communication were carried out, even at the cost of a little over £1,000, would it not be very well spent? Would it not be money spent that would be useful now and for years to come? How often was the telegraph-line broken on the east coast of the North Island! and then communication with the northern district was interrupted for some considerable time. The Government had told the people in his district that they recognised that the line ought to have been taken up the west coast, but the question remained as it was year after year. From the time this question appeared on the Order Paper last session the department had never taken the thing into consideration at all, and if he did not ask questions in reference to the matter the people would hear no more about it. He might tell the Minister that rapid settlement was going on in the district. He hoped the Minister would, after the session, send an officer to the district, and he would undertake to go with that officer and show him along the line, and he felt convinced, if he could only get the officer to travel with him through the various districts, and have the advisableness of having this telephone communication shown him, and the butter-factories, and the different towns that line would pass through, the officer would come back and, in his report to the head of the department, would recommend that the work be done forthwith. He had not made this statement with the view of embarrassing the Government, nor would he say anything against the Minister, because he knew the honourable gentleman was all that could be desired, but he had drawn attention to the matter in the interest of his constituents, and in the interests of settlement, and in order to give the department an opportunity of considering this question as they ought to do, backed up by the information he had given, and which would appear in *Hansard* for their edification.

Mr. FLATMAN did not think the adjournment of the House had been moved in any spirit of animosity by the honourable member for Invercargill. The honourable gentleman simply thought he was doing his duty, and wanted to find out where the fault lay. Although the honourable gentleman had received blame from different sides of the House he thought they must all admit there was no animosity at all in his intention. If he (Mr.

Mr. Reeves

Flatman) had a little grievance to ventilate he did not see why it should be thought that he did it in animosity. His pair was not recorded when he paired on the Land for Settlements Bill with the honourable member for Wai-kouaiti; and, as far as he could trace it, the fault was with the Government Whip, the honourable member for Waimea-Sounds; but he was not going to say he had the slightest animosity against the honourable gentleman—all men were liable to make mistakes. He might just as well have animosity against the Railway Commissioners because he had a petition there signed by a hundred and fifty of his constituents for an extra train once a week, and the Railway Commissioners had thought well to refuse that. He would like to say a word as to the honourable member for Marsden. He would like to know what the honourable gentleman had proved. He had blamed the Government, and especially the Minister of Labour; and what had he proved? All that the honourable gentleman had proved was that the Government were neglecting Canterbury. If the Government devoted some money to that district, so that some railways might be made there, they would not want to send their men to the North Island to get work. The honourable member for Marsden had proved that he was getting the best of the bargain. He thought the honourable gentleman ought to be more than satisfied with the amount of money which was being expended in his district. He trusted they would hear nothing further from the honourable member, for he had only shown a bad case against himself.

Mr. J. W. KELLY would just say a few words in reply to what had been stated by the honourable member for Wellington City (Mr. Bell) and a few other honourable members in the way of giving Mr. Cathro a certificate of character. He would remind those honourable members that he did not attack Mr. Cathro for anything he had done during the time those honourable members spoke of. They had all lost sight of Mr. Cathro for many years. The statements which had been made reminded him of people giving a good character to some person who was being tried for a crime, and who was likely to be convicted—these people came forward for the purpose of trying to influence the Magistrate or the Judge. The honourable member for Wellington City (Mr. Bell) said that if the debts were bought by Cathro before the money belonging to Dillon was handed to him it was not a dishonest transaction. All he had to say was this: that he had been advised by legal authorities in Wellington that the whole transaction from beginning to end was illegal. Yet the honourable gentleman stood up and made the statement which he had done. Perhaps it was owing to his (Mr. Kelly's) not belonging to the legal profession, but he had an entirely different idea of what honesty meant. If this was not a dishonest transaction, he thought there would be difficulty in finding a dishonest transaction in the colony. The honourable

gentleman said that the Courts were open to this man. This was the first time that it had come to his knowledge that a man could lay a case like this before a law society without being involved in costs. If what the honourable gentleman said was correct, he would take immediate steps to have this case brought before the Canterbury Law Society. He, however, would venture to say that before he took half a dozen steps he would receive an intimation that certain costs must be paid.

An Hon. MEMBER.—No.

Mr. J. W. KELLY was very glad to have the assurance of the honourable member on that point. He thought it was a shame and a disgrace, the way this man had been treated by Cathro. Some honourable members might defend him, but he would say that no honest man would do such a thing as had been done by Cathro. If the law permitted lawyers to go round the town to find out to whom their clients were indebted, so that they could deduct that money—if that was the law, the sooner the law was altered the better.

An Hon. MEMBER.—The law does not permit it.

Mr. J. W. KELLY said, and yet his honourable friend attempted to defend the character of a man who did that which he admitted was an illegal transaction. He had no wish to persecute the man, because he was an utter stranger to him; but he had a duty to perform to his friend, and not only to his friend, but similar hardships might happen to many other working-men in the colony. By having this exposed on the floor of the House good service would be done, and it would prevent other needy lawyers from doing what had been done to his friend.

Mr. BELL wished to explain, with regard to the law societies, that no law society in New Zealand made any demand for costs of the investigation of a case against a lawyer where the complainant was a man without means.

Motion for adjournment negatived.

HARBOUR AND EDUCATION RESERVES BILL.

The House divided on the question, "That this Bill be read a second time."

AYES, 33.

Buddo	Kelly, J. W.	Mills
Buick	Lang	Parata
Carncross	Larnach	Pirani
Carnell	Mackintosh	Saunders
Collins	Maslin	Seddon
Crowther	McGowan	Smith, E. M.
Duncan	McKenzie, J.	Thompson
Flatman	McKenzie, R.	Ward.
Graham	McLachlan	<i>Tellers.</i>
Houston	Meredith	Harris
Hutchison, W.	Miller	Morrison.
Joyce		

NOES, 19.

Bell	Heke	Montgomery
Duthie	Hutchison, G.	Mitchelson
Earnshaw	Massey	Newman
Hall	McNab	Pinkerton

Russell, W. R.	Tanner	Tellers.
Smith, G. J.	Wilson.	Allen
Stout		Fraser.

PAIRS.	
For.	Against.
Guinness	Te Ao
Hall-Jones	Stevens
Hogg	Green
Lawry.	Mackenzie, T.

Majority for, 14.

Bill read a second time.

INSPECTION OF MACHINERY BILL.

4.30. Mr. SEDDON, in moving the second reading, said the Bill was intended to remedy a defect in the existing law. It was claimed that men in charge of engines and machinery, where life and property were at stake, should be competent for their duties, and, in order that they might be proved to be competent, should undergo examination. Persons, however, who had been engaged in the same work for three years before the 30th June, 1895, would be exempt, and not required to undergo examination. Where the engines were very small, and where there was no valuable property at stake, the persons in charge were also exempt. It could be proved that there were some very incompetent persons in charge of some classes of engines in the colony, and some safeguard was required in regard thereto; otherwise explosions might take place and serious loss of life and property occur. The Bill was recommended by the Inspector of Machinery as a necessary one to remedy the defects at present existing.

Mr. DUNCAN considered that the Bill should not apply to threshing and other farm engines. These engines only worked a few months in the year, and the men in charge were perfectly competent to manage them. They were also carefully inspected by the Inspector, whose duty it was to see whether they were as carefully looked after as they should be. He was not aware of any complaints having been made against the workmen in charge of such engines, and he thought they should be allowed to continue as before. Another grievance was that the owners of small engines were compelled to pay an unreasonable charge for the inspection of the same. He referred to stationary engines.

Mr. SEDDON said the Bill did not apply to stationary threshing-engines.

Mr. DUNCAN was doubtful on that point. There were upwards of fifty traction-engines travelling about the country at a certain time of the year, and the men in charge had no difficulty in driving them. They were handled as easily as a horse and dray. He himself could probably take one of them anywhere, although he had not passed an examination. He hoped the House would be careful to see that engines of this class were not interfered with.

Mr. MILLAR intended to support the Bill, but he did not think it went far enough. There was just as much danger in a man

attending to the boiler of a threshing-engine as there was in attending to the boiler of a steam-launch, or in a mine. The Government ought to institute a sound examination, in which a man should show that he could manage a boiler before he was allowed to take charge of one, or of other machinery. There were numbers of persons employed in sawmills and factories, and through negligence in regard to boilers very serious accidents might occur.

Mr. WILSON thought the Bill was unnecessary, as an employer would take pretty good care to see that the man placed in charge of an engine was competent to have charge of it, as he would be liable for any damage in case of accident.

Mr. TANNER said the main provisions of the Bill went evidently in the right direction, and it was a measure just as much in the interest of engine-owners as it was in the interests of the engine-drivers and of the general public. If a person whose skill and competence could be guaranteed was in charge of an engine, whether travelling or stationary, there was some reasonable ground for supposing the engine would be handled with the precision and care required. Some simple form of certificate would be largely in the nature of a certificate of competence, and would guard owners from being imposed upon by men making misrepresentations as to their capacity, which from time to time had been the cause of considerable inconvenience, danger, and very often serious loss. In a southern city not very long ago a larrikin youth represented himself as being competent to drive an engine in a manufacturing establishment. He was intrusted with the duty, but before the first day was over his incompetence was so far revealed to himself that, the engine getting altogether beyond his control, he fled in a state of terror from the establishment, and had it not been for some one who understood the management going in and seeing the situation of affairs the result might have been a most disastrous explosion. The necessity of drivers going through some simple examination and getting certificates would obviate anything of that kind in future; but he trusted that the qualifications for the holding of a certificate would not be made unnecessarily stringent.

Mr. EARNSHAW said his experience had been that, so far as the qualifications of engine-drivers were concerned, it was more a question of cool nerve than anything else. At the same time he thought that where the lives of people were intrusted to engine-drivers it was necessary that there should be some examination made of their competency. As far as traction-engines going along the public roads were concerned, there should be some nominal evidence of qualification required before a person was allowed to have control of them; and he thought the provision of this measure a very fair and proper one, and not at all drastic. With regard to the exemption of railway servants, one reason why they should be exempted was the fact that the great bulk of engine-drivers served a long time as engine-

cleaners and firemen, and they got a thorough grip of the mechanism of engines. He trusted the House would see its way to pass this Bill. He could quite understand that members from Canterbury, where there was a large number of traction-engines in use, might think the Bill rather hard upon the owners of these engines; but he thought it was necessary the public should be safeguarded. There was no great skill required in the driving of these engines, but at the same time he thought the public should be safeguarded by a certain amount of technical knowledge on the part of those who were placed in charge of them.

Mr. E. M. SMITH did not see anything at all objectionable in this Bill, but, when they mixed up the Bill with some other little Bill, and got it interpreted, then came in the query. Now, he knew himself that there should be a qualified engine-driver to all machinery where life and property were depending, but he maintained that in his district they had a very great grievance against the machinery department. There were any number of small engines and little steamers at work, and there ought to be some small pamphlet issued by the machinery department setting forth on what terms and conditions youths in charge of engines could get certificates. He did not mean as engine-drivers qualified for driving an express train or small steamers, but there were a number of young men who would like to be examined as to their fitness to be placed in charge of engines as drivers. Ever since he had been in Wellington, and long before coming to Wellington, he tried to get to know what was the proper mode for these young men to be examined. The Inspector of Machinery was in the Taranaki District a short time ago. Two or three young men there had been driving engines for four or five years without the slightest accident happening, and they could pass an examination as to too much steam or too little water in the boilers. The Inspector told them, "I have no instructions to examine you"; and no examination took place unless these young men came down to Wellington. These Inspectors were paid high rates to inspect the machinery, and the department ought to issue a small pamphlet at sixpence or a shilling, telling these young men what to do; and when the Inspector went round there should be a time set aside, and these youths could go before him and pass an examination for certificates. Then there would be no fear of these explosions. He made this statement in order that the Minister might direct the Inspector of Machinery, when he went round in future, to notify that he was going round, and to state by advertisement in the newspapers that he was prepared to receive for examination any of these young men. Then these young men would have certificates of competency. If that were done, then the Inspector would be doing what was very much required.

Mr. G. W. RUSSELL failed to see why there should be any exemption to the men driving on the railways. The honourable member for Dunedin City (Mr. Earnshaw) said it was not

necessary that the men employed in the railway service should have certificates, because they usually started as firemen and worked their way upwards. But he (Mr. Russell) might point out that the men who drove railway-engines frequently had a thousand or fifteen hundred people in their charge, and if it was necessary to have certificates in the case of traction-engines surely it was necessary there should be some guarantee of competency in regard to the drivers of railway-engines. In regard to traction-engines, owners would protect themselves by putting only competent men to look after them—the owners as a rule were able to look after themselves; and what the honourable member for Dunedin City (Mr. Earnshaw) had said with regard to the drivers of traction-engines applied with much greater force to the railway hands; but, if the House insisted upon the drivers of traction-engines having certificates, it would be very unfair that a number of men should be shut out from getting certificates because they did not possess sufficient literary ability to enable them to obtain these certificates. He had no objection if the provision were made to apply in future, or after a certain time; but, in the case of men who had been employed on traction-engines for three or four years, they should not be expected to pass the examination provided for under this Bill.

Major STEWARD said, surely the honourable member for Riccarton could not have read the Bill. He quite agreed with him that it would be a hardship if persons who had for years been driving traction-engines should not be able to get certificates without examination; but if the honourable gentleman looked at subsection (1) of section 5 he would find that that very thing was provided for, and that the whole of his argument was entirely out away. With regard to the necessity for some certificate independently of such circumstances, as well as with regard to persons driving traction-engines on public roads, there could be no doubt whatever that such certificates were necessary. He had presented a petition to the House this session upon this question. There was an accident occurred on one of the roads in the South, where a couple of lives were lost. He did not say it necessarily followed that the accident resulted from any fault of the driver, but there was an impression that this had something to do with the accident, and it showed the necessity for some examination and for the issue of certificates to persons driving traction-engines along public roads. The matter was one of considerable interest. He believed that there were as many as 230 of these engines in Canterbury alone. He thought, on the whole, the Bill was an exceedingly good one, and if the honourable member for Riccarton had looked at it more carefully than he had evidently done he would have found the very point he had taken exception to was provided for in the Bill as printed.

Mr. R. MCKENZIE did not see anything very objectionable in this Bill, but he would like to point out to the honourable member for

Waimate that what the honourable gentleman said was provided for was not provided for at all. He would find, on reference to the subsection which he had just read, that it was permissive and not imperative; and the most objectionable feature of this Bill was that very clause. He was satisfied a better class of engine-drivers than those employed on traction-engines at present could not be got from among young lads just out of workshops. He did not think it was necessary to apply the provision to drivers of railway-engines, because they had already to undergo an examination as to their competency before being promoted to the charge of a locomotive; and he did not think the public ran any great risk in regard to drivers of locomotive engines.

5.0. Mr. MORRISON had much pleasure in rising to support the proposals embodied in the Bill, as the necessity had arisen for a Bill of this description. With regard to some of the remarks which had been made by the speaker who preceded him, the honourable member for the Buller, he was inclined to think that honourable gentleman had not read the Bill, or, rather, he had not read it as closely as he might have done. He would draw the honourable gentleman's attention to clause 3, and to subsection (2) of clause 5. The honourable gentleman had made a strong point of this: that there were plenty of engineers or men in charge of engines who might not possess the necessary technical or literary ability—as the honourable member for Riccarton stated—for passing the examination prescribed. That subsection, however, said,—

“Any Inspector of Machinery, with the approval of the Board of Examiners, may, on occasions, as he thinks fit, examine any candidate orally as to his qualifications for a certificate as an engine-driver, and the said oral examination may be accepted by the Board on the report of the Inspector in lieu of a written examination, and the Board may issue a certificate of competency to the candidate accordingly.”

That was the point he wished to bring out. The honourable gentleman would therefore be very glad to see that it did not require any literary ability on the part of the man who presented himself for examination. The person would present himself to the Inspector of Machinery, and the Inspector would ask him some necessary practical questions, to which he would answer, and, if the Inspector was thoroughly satisfied that he showed that he possessed the necessary amount of skill, he would recommend him for a certificate. He really thought the Bill was in the right direction, and he did not see that there was any necessity for getting up and finding fault with it. He was very much pleased to see a Bill of this description brought down. He knew of a large number of cases in which incompetent men were placed in charge of engines, and sometimes, as it proved, to the injury of the community.

Mr. BUDDO assured honourable members this was a very excellent measure indeed, and

Mr. R. McKensie

he believed it was calculated to afford considerably more safety to the public than they had had in the past, especially in the matter of the driving of traction-engines. He did not pretend to be an expert in mining matters, but the Bill showed clearly that some degree of inspection was required even there, owing to the frequency of accidents. As to the question of including railway-engine drivers, of course that matter must be left to the managers of the locomotive department to deal with as they thought fit. Their system of grading, he believed, in most cases was absolutely perfect; and any one at the head of a locomotive department would take good care that his hands passed through the various grades, and were competent before they were given the control of an engine. But this matter of the driving of mining and traction engines lay outside technical knowledge, and therefore there must be some degree of inspection. He thought the Bill gave every reasonable latitude for an engine-driver, who might not have the practical knowledge gained by workshop experience, to get a certificate; and therefore he had much pleasure in supporting the second reading.

Mr. MASSEY said one thing was quite clear, and that was, it was intended not only to apply to the class of engines used for mining purposes, but also to traction-engines. Now, so far as mining purposes were concerned, he had no objection to the Bill applying to engines of that character—perhaps he did not know enough about them to express an opinion; but in the matter of traction-engines he had no hesitation in saying there was no necessity for the Bill. No skill was required in driving a traction-engine—at any rate, not so much skill as they looked for in driving a railway-engine. Such being the case, he saw no necessity for it in regard to traction-engines. He happened to be the owner of a traction-engine himself, and he supposed, if this Bill became law, he would be breaking the law if he got up steam on it and worked it for a day or two. In his opinion it was altogether unnecessary, and was one of those measures which were likely to prove vexatious.

Bill read a second time.

Mining Districts Land Occupation BILL.

Mr. J. McKENZIE, in moving the second reading of this Bill, said he would shortly explain to the House what its scope and purpose were. Honourable members acquainted with the mining reserves, and with the goldfields and coalfields of the colony, would know there was a large surplus of these reserves which could not possibly be of any value as far as coal and gold-mining were concerned. At the same time there were continual demands all over these districts to get land for occupation—that was to say, land under what were known as occupation licenses. A good deal of settlement had been stopped on the goldfields, on the mining reserves, and also on the West Coast on the coalfields, owing to the fact that

security of title could not be given to the people settling down on the lands of these districts. This Bill had been prepared for the purpose of enabling people to get occupation licenses in respect of pieces of land on these reserves, making them liable to give up their leases at any time if it were found necessary and if the land was required for mining of any description whatsoever. At the present time the occupation-license holders on these reserves did the same thing; but this trouble arose: A number of people took up occupation licenses on these mineral reserves, and when they came to be driven out no provision was made to assist them by giving any compensation for the improvements they had made, and in many cases much hardship resulted, especially when it happened that the man who was turned out was a poor man who perhaps had made a nice, snug home for himself. The proposal contained in the Bill was that under necessary safeguards an application for an occupation license was to be referred to the Warden on goldfields, and to the Commissioner of Crown Lands, and a lease given for twenty-one years; but the land could be resumed at any time, if it was found necessary, on the owner of the occupation license getting the value of his improvements.

An Hon. MEMBER.—From whom.

Mr. J. MCKENZIE would answer that. The whole of the rents received from these occupation licenses would be set aside in a certain separate fund, one half to go to the local bodies as revenue to assist in the necessary works of the district, and the other half to be set aside for the purpose of paying compensation to people whose land might be resumed, and from it they would get compensation for their improvements. He thought the Bill was one which deserved the attention of the House. There were continual complaints from all parts of the colony in connection with these occupation licenses on mineral reserves, and demands made to get land for occupation, and statements that settlement was being kept back. Continually applications were being made to the department in this way from men in all parts of the colony to get the right to a little bit of land to make homes for themselves and for their wives and families on the goldfields, and that they could get a bit of land to make a garden, and keep a cow on, and so forth; and, in his opinion, it could be done without damaging mining interests in any shape or form. He thought the House would do well to pass the second reading of this Bill, and allow it to go to the Waste Lands Committee, to which he intended to refer it. He had thought it necessary to make these observations so that honourable members might understand the purport of the Bill.

Mr. GUINNESS had great pleasure in supporting this measure. It was one of those which were foreshadowed in the Governor's Speech, and he hoped the Government would press it through this session. He was very sorry to think it had been brought down at such a late period. He could assure honourable members that there

was no measure that the miners on the goldfields were more interested in than a measure in this direction—for the purpose of giving to miners some title to the land which they wanted to occupy and hold. It must be known to members of the House that in mining districts mining was not of that profitable nature now that it had been in years past, and many of the miners on the goldfields, who had reared up families there, had to resort to other means of augmenting their earnings for the subsistence and maintenance of their families; and, as he said, there was no measure which would give greater facilities for the settling of the miners on the soil than one that went in this direction. He would suggest to the honourable member in charge of the Bill that, instead of sending it to the Waste Lands Committee, he should send it to the Goldfields and Mines Committee. He believed the honourable gentleman was also a member of that Committee, and he thought, if he did this, the Bill would be considered by that Committee, not only from a land point of view, or a Waste Lands Committee point of view, but would also be considered from the point of view of the miners who were interested in this measure. He trusted the Government would this session press it forward, and not allow it to become one of those innocent measures that had to be slaughtered at the end of the session.

Mr. MILLS rose to support the suggestion made by the honourable member for the Grey. He understood, however, from the Minister of Lands that it must go to the Waste Lands Committee. It referred principally to the mining community, and he would like it, therefore, to have gone before the Mines Committee. In the electorate which he represented there were a number of miners who had resided there for the last twenty-five or thirty years. They had families now grown up, and they wished to acquire some tenure, so as to give them some security to enable them to make improvements on the small holdings they occupied. He had not had sufficient time to look carefully into the Bill, but he was quite sure it was going in the right direction. It would, he thought, require some few amendments in Committee, but he should have very great pleasure in giving his support to the Bill.

Mr. BELL would like the Minister to tell him why the Warden was not to have power of finally deciding the question of whether a grant of a particular lease would be dangerous to the interests of mining or not. It was provided in section 5 that every application must be sent to the Warden, and that the Warden must then report to the Land Board, and the Land Board was to consider his report. He ventured to suggest to the honourable gentleman that the clause should read, "The Board shall not grant any lease when the Warden's opinion shall be adverse."

Mr. J. MCKENZIE.—That is in it now.

Mr. BELL said the clause provided that the Board should consider the Warden's opinion before giving a decision on any application. But there might be a number of gentlemen on

the Board on the West Coast who might know nothing about mining, and might grant leases notwithstanding the fact that it was a dangerous and improper thing to do so. He was quite sure a Warden in a mining district would not report against a lease unless it was against the interests of mining.

Mr. MCGOWAN would simply indorse what had been said by the honourable member for Wellington City (Mr. Bell) with regard to the advisability of providing against some such contingency as the honourable gentleman had referred to. He thought, also, that the Bill should go before the Goldfields and Mines Committee; but as he had been looking over the Bill he found that if the Waste Lands Committee were prepared to consider it very carefully it was not material what Committee it went to. It appeared to him that clause 6 required some amendment in subsection (1), but on the whole he thought the Bill was very much needed in mining districts. The honourable member for Wellington City (Mr. Bell) had touched upon what had appeared to be a vital point that required amendment in the Bill, and he would say nothing further.

Sir R. STOUT did not object to the Government having power to give occupation licenses on mining reserves to miners. That was the old system in Otago as far back as 1862. The Act of 1885 also allowed occupation licenses on mining reserves. He did not object to that; but there was something he did not understand in the Bill. He would first refer to subsection (b) of section 2, which said, "The Governor may from time to time make, alter, or revoke regulations for the issue of leases for the occupation for agricultural, horticultural, and pastoral purposes of any reserves not being Native reserves or land reserved for Native purposes." That would include a recreation reserve, an education reserve, or any reserve whatever. The Governor had only to make a Proclamation and issue these licenses.

Mr. J. MCKENZIE.—Within a goldfields district.

Sir R. STOUT asked where that was provided for.

Mr. J. MCKENZIE.—In the interpretation clause.

Sir R. STOUT said subsection (1) did not limit it at all. It might mean that a Proclamation might be issued over any reserve of any kind in the colony. It might be a harbour reserve, or a Native reserve, or any other kind of reserve. He did not understand that the term "Native reserve" applied only to Native reserves in mining districts.

Mr. GUINNESS said the words "mining district" must have been left out of the section by mistake.

Mr. J. MCKENZIE thought that was a Committee objection.

Sir R. STOUT did not think so, because, if the Bill was to give the Minister power to seize any reserve he liked, whether it was in a mining district or anywhere else, it was a very wrong power to give; and, besides, there ought not to be power to take even in a mining district

an education reserve, for instance, and there ought not to be power to take recreation reserves in mining districts. This subsection would not provide against that. The whole thing would have to be recast, because he did not assume for one moment that the House was going to allow the Minister to seize for mining purposes an education reserve or any other possible reserve. The next thing he wanted to point out was a Committee objection; but there ought to be more care taken in drafting these Bills. He did not refer to the words *mutatis mutandis*, in the 3rd section. He was exceedingly glad that the Minister of Lands should recognise that some knowledge of Latin was necessary in drafting a Bill of that sort. Notwithstanding the Law Practitioners Bill he was determined at all hazards that Latin should be preserved.

Mr. J. MCKENZIE.—I did not put it there.

Sir R. STOUT said probably the honourable gentleman could not find some equivalent English words, and was therefore obliged to make use of a classic language. He thought it would have been wise to have put in some English words, in order that some members of the House might appreciate the meaning of the words used. He wished to refer to the 4th section, which was as follows:—

"Every application for an occupation lease shall be made as nearly as may be in the manner prescribed in 'The Land Act, 1892,' or any Act amending the same, and shall be accompanied by the deposit and declaration as nearly consistent therewith as the Commissioner shall require."

What was the meaning of that?

Mr. J. MCKENZIE said it meant that any one putting in an application for an occupation license on a goldfield did not know what amount he had to pay until such time as the application was approved.

Sir R. STOUT said the honourable gentleman would see that, by the first part of the section, if an application for an occupation license was made, it should be made under the Land Act of 1892. If the section stopped there, that would be all that was necessary; but to go on and say that this "shall be accompanied by the deposit and declaration as nearly as consistent therewith as the Commissioner shall require" was absurd.

Mr. J. MCKENZIE.—You could not tell the exact amount then.

Sir R. STOUT did not know whether it meant consistent with the declaration, or with the Commissioner, or what. He was not pointing this out in any captious spirit. He was pointing out that there should be a more thorough revision of the Bills before they came down to the House. During this session Ministers had brought down so many Bills that it was impossible, with the large amount of work they had to do in the House, to supervise them. He did not blame the Ministers, but it would be far better for our legislation if a fewer number of statutes were passed, and if the wording of those statutes was more carefully attended to. It seemed a good many honourable mem-

Mr. Bell

bers imagined that they had done a great deal of work if they managed to swell the bulk of the statute-book; whereas they had probably done a great deal of mischief. This Bill was only a specimen, and he could point out many Bills that had come down this session that contained many glaring blunders. Then, as to the question of whether the Warden or the Land Board should deal with applications, he thought it was far better not to have the Land Board in the matter at all.

Mr. J. McKENZIE.—You must.

Sir R. STOUT said the Warden could deal with an application as he dealt with mining applications. Say, on the Otago goldfields a man applied for a piece of a mining reserve—say, two or three acres—he had to get an agent in Dunedin to go before the Land Board for him. He would then—

Mr. J. McKENZIE.—That is done by the Warden.

Sir R. STOUT said, if a man advertised on a certain day that he was going to make application to the Warden's Court for a piece of a mining reserve, and if anybody who objected to his getting it should lodge an objection at a certain time—

Mr. J. McKENZIE.—How much would that cost?

Sir R. STOUT said it would cost very little indeed compared with what this scheme would cost. This would cost double as much.

Mr. GUINNESS said the same form should be gone through as was gone through in ordinary mining matters.

Sir R. STOUT said, exactly, and the result of that would be that a man would go before the Court, and the Warden would then decide whether the piece of mining reserve in question should be granted to him or not. He thought it was a great mistake to cumber this thing with the Land Board at all. There was hardly a single member of a Land Board who knew anything about mining; they dealt with land from a local point of view; and he thought it would be better to leave this entirely to the Wardens.

Mr. J. McKENZIE said this affected every pastoral run in Otago.

Sir R. STOUT said that showed there was some necessity to have the matter dealt with on the spot, so that the pastoral tenants should not be forced, if they had objections to make, to refer to the central authority. It would be far better to leave it to the Warden to decide. He could not understand how it affected every pastoral tenant. Did the honourable gentleman mean that, if he had granted a lease for pastoral purposes, he could take that lease away and grant it to another man for pastoral purposes? If so, that was entirely wrong.

Mr. J. McKENZIE said the honourable gentleman should know that portions of runs in Otago were leased for mining purposes.

Sir R. STOUT said the occupation licenses granted under the Act of 1885 were quite different. He understood the honourable gentleman was going to deal with—

Mr. J. McKENZIE.—No.

Sir R. STOUT said, if the honourable gentleman was going to take all the Crown lands where there were leases in a mining district, then he thought it was a very dangerous Bill.

7.30. Reading the Bill, one would think that the Crown lands dealt with under this Bill were only Crown lands which were not at present under lease. He understood from the honourable member in charge of the Bill that there was to be power to take from pastoral lessees—even from the holders of small grazing-runs—pieces of land out of their runs.

Mr. J. McKENZIE.—It only applies to pastoral runs.

Sir R. STOUT said that was not in the Bill. Pastoral leases included small grazing-runs. Supposing a man had got a run of, say, ten thousand acres, and in that run he might not have more than a thousand acres of flat or low land: under this Bill the whole of that thousand acres could be taken away from him.

Mr. J. McKENZIE said the Board had always refused to allow the land to be taken in such cases.

Sir R. STOUT was not saying what the Board had done in the matter, but that the power was granted under this Bill. If this Bill became law the Board might take the whole of the thousand acres out of the run, and leave the tenant with the hilly country, leaving him without a bit of lambing or winter country. It also applied to small grazing-runs—there was no exemption of small grazing-runs. What would follow? The whole of the pastoral runs in Otago were in mining districts. This Bill simply meant that the small runholders in pastoral districts would be utterly ruined. He did not say that the Board would ruin them, but it was left optional with the Board to do that or not as they pleased. If that was so, what was the value of their security? Supposing these persons wished to borrow money on their leases, what would be the value of their security? This was a most monstrous proposition, to say that they could give to any person who applied for a mining lease land taken out of the pastoral leases. It was true the area was limited to one hundred acres, but, still, land could also be taken, as he had said, for pastoral purposes. He submitted that that was entirely monstrous; there was no other term which he could apply to such a suggestion. The next point he wished to refer to was this: that under subsection (b) any reserve whatever could be taken—any education, recreation, or even municipal reserve might be taken. And, then, what was to be done with the money? It was not to be given to the person by whom the reserve was held, but it was to be paid into a special account kept by the Colonial Treasurer, and one-half of that special account was to be used for paying for improvements on land—not for that special land, but for any land, apparently, because there was no separation in the account; it was to be made one account for general purposes. Really, when he heard one member after another get up and say that he cordially approved of the Bill, it was plain to him that those honourable

members did not understand its provisions. Those honourable members assumed, as he assumed at first, that the Bill only gave power to let Crown lands in mining districts—that by the word “reserve” must be meant mining reserves; but there was no such limitation. There were many people who had small runs in the uplands of Otago who might be entirely ruined under this Bill, and he, for one, did not think the Bill should be passed.

Mr. FRASER did not know whether honourable members were aware of the fact that this Bill really meant, subject to the approval of the Land Board, free selection before survey.

Sir R. STOUT.—Leased lands.

Mr. FRASER said, Yes. It was true the power to acquire land under occupation license granted by this Bill was to be found in the Mines Act. Evidently for some purpose or other the Minister of Lands desired to take that power—he did not say it was a wrong thing at all—under a special Act, so that he should have the administration of it. There was, no doubt, a great deal of truth in what the honourable member for Wellington City (Sir R. Stout) had said, that great wrong might be done to some of those who held leases of pastoral land. Section 5, if honourable members would read it, provided that the application should be referred to the Warden, and that it must also go before the Land Board. In considering an application in the past, the Board and Warden had to consider how it would affect both the pastoral tenant's position and the public estate. But that was not the case, apparently, under this Bill. It would appear that the only question which had now to be considered was, whether the granting of the leases would or would not have a prejudicial effect in regard to mining purposes. Not one word was said as to how it would affect the public estate. That, he thought, was clearly an omission. If it was made clear that that was not intended, it would remove his objection in that respect. He had had no idea this Bill was to be discussed that evening. It had only been distributed during the last few hours, and he had not had an opportunity of properly considering it. He confessed he had hardly had time to glance through the Bill. If section 5 only made similar provision to that which existed in the past he would say nothing against it, because the Legislature determined some years ago to grant that right, and he, for one, had no desire to alter the law in that respect. There was no doubt that when the power to grant occupation licenses of a hundred acres was conceded an injustice was done to pastoral tenants; but there was no use going back on that now. He admitted that facilities were thus afforded for residents on goldfields to take up pieces of land as homesteads, but it was never intended that this provision should replace settlement under our land-laws. He certainly hoped this Bill was not going to have that effect, because, if so, it certainly would not be right or fair to those who held pastoral leases.

Mr. O'REGAN said the honourable gentleman who had just sat down was evidently under

Sir R. Stout

the impression that there was no demand for this Bill. He (Mr. O'Regan) knew that there was a demand for some such provisions as this Bill contained. Under the existing law miners were subjected to great hardship in the matter of occupation licenses, in so far that under the present law it was impossible to obtain occupation leases without residence upon them. He knew of numerous instances on the West Coast—and he dared say there were cases in other parts of the colony—where miners who were working poor ground, which yielded only a small return of gold, were anxious to keep some stock and to do a little farming in conjunction with their mining operations. Alluvial ground, or any ground which carried gold, was, as a rule, very poor for agricultural purposes; but it often occurred that in goldfield districts there were fertile spots along riverbeds, and under this Bill miners would be able to obtain occupation licenses for those small pieces of land without having to reside on them. There was no doubt that, if this Bill became law, a great deal of land which would not pay for working under existing circumstances could be occupied and worked with advantage. There were, however, many blemishes in the Bill. To his mind, it would be better to dissociate the Land Board from the measure altogether. He quite agreed with the senior member for Wellington City in that respect, because he had very little confidence in the Land Boards. He thought it would be far more satisfactory to the miners if the applications were considered by the Warden only. Cases had come to his knowledge in which there had been flagrant abuses by the Boards as at present constituted. He agreed also with the senior member for Wellington City as to the loose wording of subsection (b), but he thought a slight amendment would make that right. With some slight amendments the Bill was a very desirable one, and he had much pleasure in supporting it.

Mr. BUICK indorsed the remarks of the last speaker with regard to the necessity for the Bill. In his district the miners who desired to settle on mining lands, and to carry on agriculture in connection with their mining, found enormous difficulty in getting land, and when they did get it it was under such a tenure that it was almost useless to them. He believed that in Marlborough they got a lease for ten years, and for any improvements they made on the land they received no compensation: hence miners who were desirous of settling on the land were under enormous difficulty. He also agreed with what had been said in regard to the elimination of the Land Boards from the Bill. He did not know what was the Minister's justification for taking up this position. Under the present law there was constant conflict between the Land Boards and the Wardens, and so long as they had two bodies dealing with a question of this sort he could see nothing for it but conflict. If the Minister could show reasonable argument why the Boards should be retained he would have no objection. He congratulated him on intro-

ducing the Bill, because, as a matter of fact, it was urgently required in many parts of the colony.

Mr. R. McKENZIE said this was one of the most important Bills for the mining districts of the West Coast that had been before the House for some years. They had there a very large area of land which was practically useless for mining purposes, and which could be put to very good use for agricultural or pastoral purposes if the miners or settlers could get a reasonable tenure on it. Under the present Act all they could get was an occupation license, which entitled them to five acres; and they were liable to be turned off at three months' notice, without compensation. This Bill was going to provide against that. It allowed any man to take up a hundred acres on a twenty-one years' lease, with the provision that if the land was required for mining purposes he was to be paid compensation. This would be of very great use in promoting settlement, not only on the West Coast, but in other mining districts of the colony. He was somewhat surprised at the senior member for Wellington City saying that the Bill had a general application, which it had not. If the honourable gentleman looked at the title he would see that it only dealt with mining districts, and with no other districts in the colony. The honourable gentleman would admit that the open clear lands in Otago were already occupied.

Sir R. STOUT.—They are going to take them.

Mr. R. McKENZIE said they were not going to take them under this Bill. They might under the Land for Settlements Bill; but they could not touch them under this Bill.

Sir R. STOUT.—The Minister says so.

Mr. R. McKENZIE said, if the Minister said so, he disagreed with both the honourable gentleman and the Minister. The honourable member for Wakatipu seemed to find fault with clause 5. He thought that was a very essential and useful clause. It reserved the discretionary power to the Wardens in the mining districts, which was absolutely necessary. The rights of the miners should always be protected against the rights of the settlers, as mining was more beneficial and important to mining districts than farming was. But so long as discretionary power was left with the Wardens it was perfectly safe, as they would not give away any land that was payable auriferous, or necessary for mining purposes. He thought, as the honourable member for Inangahua had stated, it would be much better that the Land Boards should have nothing to do with the administration of the Act. The miners would be satisfied with the Warden's judgment in the matter, and it would be quite safe for the country to leave it in his hands. As the Bill stood at present it was not anything like perfect and required a great deal of amendment, so far as the West Coast was concerned. He would support the second reading, and would support it through Committee, as the commencement of a necessary and bene-

ficial reform. He hoped the House would pass the Bill, as it was going entirely in the right direction, to materially help the miners and mining industry generally throughout the colony.

Mr. ALLEN thought any Bill that would tend to fix the miner on the soil and make a permanent home for him would be a good one, and, so far as he could gather, this Bill was intended to do that. But it was the duty of the State to see that those who had rights were not unjustly interfered with, and he was not quite sure that under the Bill the rights of those who possessed such were strictly guarded. The Land Board already had a voice in the matter, and the Wardens had a voice. He supposed the Wardens were intended to protect the miner, or any rights that might accrue to him, and the Land Board was to protect the pastoral tenant. Whether this protection was sufficient or not he hardly knew. He thought a slight mistake had been made by one or two speakers with regard to the matter of residence. So far as he understood it, areas of from ten to a hundred acres were only granted on the condition that the miners who took them up took up residence thereon. If the Bill was an inducement to the miner to settle down on a piece of land and make a home it was a good thing. But it was only right that the pastoral tenant should be protected, and he hoped the Minister had satisfied himself that he got sufficient protection under the Bill. One part of the Bill that he objected to was subsection (b) of clause 2, which said, "Of any reserve not being a Native reserve or land reserved for Native purposes." That was surely a very wide-reaching subsection. There were all sorts of reserves, and it might be very inconvenient if this subsection were to become law. Commonage might be taken away from the people who were entitled to enjoy it, and the miner given an occupation license over it. Education reserves might be in the same position. Surely that was not fair. For instance, a commonage was given for the benefit of the whole people, miners included, and he could not see why power should be given to an individual miner, or to two or three, to practically occupy the best part of the commonage on occupation license. He hoped the Minister, when the Bill was in Committee, would accept some amendment in that subsection. So far as the Bill generally was concerned, there was not very much objection to it; and he was glad enough to assist in any legislation that would in these days, when, at any rate, alluvial mining was declining, tend to fix the miner on the soil.

Mr. J. McKENZIE said it was quite evident the senior member for Wellington City had misunderstood the Bill altogether. He could not have travelled very much and seen the requirements of the country. No doubt his theory was all right, but when it came to practice he was afraid the honourable gentleman had not kept his education in that respect up to the mark. He (Mr. McKenzie) had found, wherever he travelled in the colony,

during the time he had been a Minister, that there was a great want of a Bill of this sort. They had got all the powers at present in the Mines Act. The honourable gentleman shook his head, but they had, and the honourable gentleman knew it. One objection that had been raised to the Bill was to subsection (b) of clause 2. It was never intended that that should mean any education reserves, or any reserve for another purpose, as an endowment in any shape or form; but, if there was any other reserve, not granted as an endowment, why should the people not be allowed to use it?

Sir R. STOUT.—Commonages?

Mr. J. MCKENZIE said, Yes, in some cases, commonages. He believed some of them were a great nuisance where they were situated, and would be better occupied by the people. Another objection raised to the Bill was that the Land Board was to have the granting of the leases. At the present time there was continual friction between the Warden and the Land Board, because the Warden could do nothing without the assistance of the Board. The Land Department had the surveyors and the whole staff to initiate and carry out the lease, and without them nothing could be done. Honourable members would see that, when an occupation license was to be granted, there must be a survey before the lease could be granted. He was prepared to meet by definition, as far as possible, any objection raised in connection with the powers of the Warden and of the Land Boards. In some parts of the colony it was absolutely necessary that the Land Boards should have the power. The remarks of the honourable member for Wakatipu showed the necessity for the Land Board having power to protect Crown lands and prevent their being cut up in such a way as to injure the pastoral tenants, or the future occupation of the country; and the honourable the senior member for Wellington City said the same thing: you might give away a thousand acres of low country, and leave a man with nine hundred acres of high country; so the Land Board must protect their own tenants, and protect the country in such a way that it would not be spoiled for future settlement. It would be easy, when the Bill was in Committee, or in the Waste Lands Committee, to define the duties of the Wardens and the Boards. Honourable gentlemen must remember this was the first attempt at this sort of legislation in the House. The Bill had been backwards and forwards three or four times between the Lands and Mines Department, and the legislation was to a certain extent experimental. This being the case, honourable members would see that it was a very difficult matter to make the Bill sufficiently perfect to meet the various requirements of the various parts of the colony.

8.0. When the Bill was before the Waste Lands Committee it would perhaps be necessary to make provision in that respect, and to consider what would be most suitable for the respective districts of Nelson, Westland, and Otago. There was, however, a great deal of difficulty with regard to the manner in

which land could be occupied; but the real object of this particular Bill was to enable occupation licenses to be taken up on mining reserves throughout the colony.

Sir R. STOUT.—That can be done now.

Mr. J. MCKENZIE said, Yes; but there was no right to grant a man compensation if his occupation license were taken away. That was one of the great drawbacks in regard to mining reserves throughout the colony, as people would not take up leases with the chance of being turned off within two or three years, without compensation for improvements. Provision was made for a right of renewal for twenty-one years; and, in case the land should be required for mining, provision was also made that one-half of the rent derived from the occupation licenses should be set aside for the purpose of paying compensation. The great difficulty at the present time in regard to these occupation licenses, as he had stated, was that two or three years after the licenses were granted the lands might be required for mining; and they had to face the question of turning a hard-working, industrious miner out of his house and home without any compensation. The honourable member for Wakatipu knew that was correct; and, if the Land Board knew that they had to give a man compensation on his losing his land, then they would be careful about turning him off. Proper safeguards would be put in the Bill in regard to educational reserves; and, as the honourable member for Wellington City (Sir R. Stout) was a member of the Waste Lands Committee, he would be only too happy to have his assistance in putting the Bill into such a shape that there would be no danger in any of its provisions. He moved the second reading.

Bill read a second time.

GOVERNMENT ADVANCES TO SETTLERS BILL.

Mr. WARD.—Sir, this is a very important Bill, and I feel quite sure it is one that will meet with the approval of the House, and that that approval will be indorsed by the country. After all is said and done, what we are about to do this evening is to repeat history, for in the year 1770, in a similar way, was established, or commenced, in Germany, the first Credit Foncier system, and the circumstances under which that establishment took place are very remarkable, inasmuch as the position of their people was very similar to the position of many people in this colony. The cause of the system being established in the first instance was owing to the high rates of interest prevailing, the low price of produce, and, in addition to that, these unfortunate circumstances were accentuated by a war. Frederick the Great, recognising the advantage that it was likely to be to his people, endowed the first Credit Foncier system with £45,000. The system was first established in Silesia; and afterwards almost every other state in Germany established a similar institution. The good that has been done has been very remarkable. Again, in 1852, after many years of effort,

Mr. J. McKensie

similar institutions were established in France, and one of these has recently published its report, which shows that it has advanced between seven and eight millions under the system then established.

Mr. G. HUTCHISON.—Seven or eight million francs?

Mr. WARD.—No; I am referring to English pounds sterling, and dealing with English moneys entirely. The object of this Bill is to enable people in this colony to obtain money at lower rates of interest than have hitherto prevailed. The necessity for that, I think, is admitted by most people. We are in the habit of complaining about the congestion of the labour-market, and we are in the habit of finding fault with my honourable friend the Minister of Lands for not settling more people upon the land; but what is the primary cause of the trouble in both cases is want of the necessary means to enable the people in the first instance to be placed upon the land, and, after they are placed upon the land, the wherewithal to fully develop it. I say that the true solution of the efforts my honourable friend and colleague the Minister of Lands is making to settle people upon the land is to be found in the measure now before the House. I think that perhaps I might here state that the amount of private mortgages existing in New Zealand—that is, those which are under the Land Transfer Act—is £29,606,579, and I think it is within the knowledge of most of us that the various lending institutions in this colony have in late years shown anything but a disposition to grant loans to those who require mortgages for the purpose of developing their lands, or even to go on improving their land. In many cases, those who have mortgages already know that when they have become due they have had considerable difficulty in renewing them. I could, if I desired to take up the time of the House this evening, give numbers of cases which have come to the knowledge of the Government of people who with good securities have endeavoured to get renewals of their mortgages during the past three or four years, and have been unable to get them renewed except on terms very much more unfavourable than existed formerly. Looking at the money-market, both in this colony and in other parts of the world, I think there has been nothing to warrant an advance in the direction I have stated. It is quite true that some mortgage companies which have been carrying on this class of business have got into difficulties, and that, as a result of their difficulties, their first essential was to look after themselves. In some cases, their debenture-capital falling due made it necessary to call up mortgages in order to enable them to put their finances right. But, whatever the circumstances were which led to it, I say, during the last three or four years, from unusual circumstances in this colony, owners of good lands—numerous good securities—have found themselves in the position of being unexpectedly called upon to pay up their mortgages. This proposal is to endeavour to effect a remedy for the evil I

have complained of, and I tell the House that it may expect that there will be considerable opposition from vested interests to the proposals which are contained in this Bill. By "vested interests" I mean all those who are likely to be most affected by it. I desire now to discuss the main points of the Bill, and in doing so I will endeavour to clear away some of the misconception which exists in the minds of some honourable members. In the first place, a reference to the Bill will show that it is intended to establish an office to be termed "The Advances to Settlers Office," the necessity for such an office being self-evident; but I wish honourable members clearly to understand that, though it is stated in the Bill that an office is to be established, it is not intended to create an independent department for the purpose of carrying out the proposals of the Bill. There is no necessity to do that, as, fortunately, we have the requisite machinery in existence at present, without creating another department, with additional expense to the country. The intention is to utilise the services of the head of one of the existing departments, to utilise the clerical staff which is in the office, and the whole of the machinery which is already in existence in that particular office will be used for the purpose of carrying on this branch of the business.

An Hon. MEMBER.—Which department?

Mr. WARD.—One of the lending-offices.

An Hon. MEMBER.—Which one?

Mr. WARD.—I say one of the lending-offices.

An Hon. MEMBER.—Let us know which.

Mr. WARD.—I would ask the honourable member to let me proceed in my own way. One of the offices here will be utilised for this purpose, and no additional expense will be incurred, so far as the country is concerned, for the establishment of a head office or the creation of a new one. In connection with this matter I desire to point out to honourable members the constitution of the Board at headquarters. It will be observed that the Board is the same Board that conducts the lending business of the Government Insurance Department and the lending business of the Public Trust Office. That Board has been put in advisedly, and for this reason: that the official heads of the various departments constituting that Board are in an excellent position to judge of any application for a loan that may come before them. The success that has characterized the management of those two departments has been very marked indeed; and while upon this matter I may just be allowed to say that it will be very useful to know what has been lent out by these two institutions since they have been created—that is, the amount of the private loans, and the amount of the losses they have had to provide for since their establishment—as this will be a very important point before this debate is done. Now, Sir, the Public Trust Office has lent on mortgage £453,475, and out of the whole of that large sum of money the total amount of losses made by the department is only £4,099, and of that £4,099 the sales of properties upon

which losses have been made have reduced the loss by £2,100. So that upon a loan of very nearly half a million of money lent by the Public Trust Department a loss practically of something like £1,999 only has been made.

Mr. DUTHIE.—What is outstanding?

Mr. WARD.—£453,475 has been advanced, and the ascertained loss is practically only £1,999.

Mr. DUTHIE.—But what is outstanding?

Mr. WARD.—Well, Sir, the honourable gentleman is very fastidious. The honourable gentleman knows perfectly well that in the conduct of the Public Trust Department every security is written down in the ordinary way and brought to debit, and that debit is said to be a loss, and is shown as a loss. And I say the position is now that after this large sum of money has been lent the Public Trust Office stands only at a loss of £1,999 upon nearly half a million of money. Then, coming to another lending department, the Government Insurance Office has advanced, since it was created, upon private mortgages £707,017; and you will observe in this year's report that a sum of £43,000 has been provided for depreciation of securities: but the bulk of that sum—£42,000, I may say, of it—is to be debited against what is known as the old Board, principally for losses incurred by bad purchases of properties. Since the office itself has been conducted by the same Board I have named this evening which is to control the advances to settlers under this Bill, the Government Insurance Department has only lost £1,000 out of advances made by the new Board of £518,337. Now, I think the large sum lent, and the loss to be put against it, shows clearly that the Board selected by the Government for the Lending Board for the purposes of this Bill is a Board upon which the colony can place the greatest dependence. The various members of the proposed Board will be enabled by their knowledge of affairs and their experiences in the past to thoroughly safeguard the interests of the colony.

An Hon. MEMBER.—There is the 50-per-cent. limit.

Mr. WARD.—I will come to that later on, but I may say here that in practice it has been found to be a bad thing for the institution that it is 50 per cent., for some of the cream of the investments in this colony has gone to other offices whose limit has not been 50 per cent. Now, Sir, I pass on to the question of District Boards. Now, honourable members may assume that the District Boards proposed under this Bill are to be paid Boards. They are to be Boards consisting of existing Government officers selected in different parts of the colony in order to co-operate with the main Board at head-quarters. I desire to say to the House that when this Bill was originally drafted I had in it the actual names of the officers who were to be put in as members of the District Boards. They were, I may inform the House, in each large centre the Registrar of Deeds, the Commissioner of Crown Lands, and the Chief Postmaster; and they were left out

Mr. Ward

upon further consideration because in some parts of the colony the same three officers could not be found, and consequently it was inconvenient to name them in the Bill. Otherwise they would have been named in the Bill, and each of them would have a considerable knowledge of what is going on, because at the present time in many of the towns of this colony the Chief Postmasters represent the Insurance Department, the Land and Income-tax Department, and the Public Trust Office, and they have therefore a fair knowledge of what the local positions of people are, and what their surroundings are, and of anything improper that may be going on; and I may further inform the House, in connection with this Bill, that wherever it is possible to put these officers on the District Board they will be put upon it. In cases where they are not obtainable, then others will be found; but it is not intended to create expensive District Boards, or paid Boards of any description whatever. Now, I may further say that from the very first the Government recognised that it was absolutely essential, in connection with a proposal such as this is, that the strictest economy should be exercised, and that safe administration was an essential to its being successfully carried out. Now, I wish to point out to the House what is likely to be the expense incurred under the proposals contained in this Bill. In the first place I should say that for the whole colony at the outside there will not be more than ten Valuers and ten District Solicitors. That number may require to be appointed; not more, I think. That, however, would be the extreme number. Possibly honourable members will agree with me in saying that if we are to have the whole services of Valuers, and if we are to get good and independent men, a salary of not less than £600 a year each would be required. I am putting it at this high amount deliberately, as it is better that I should do so than place the estimate on the other side. Thus, in the estimates of expenditure I am giving you, I propose deliberately to keep them on the high side. Ten Valuers would require to be paid at the rate of £600 a year each—that amounts to £6,000; and then, with regard to the ten Solicitors, let us suppose that they shall have from £1,000 each, in some of the largest centres, to £400 in some of the smallest,—this to include all the other work now carried on by the Government. It is a fair average to take that these ten Solicitors would cost £7,000 a year; and add that to the £6,000 paid to Valuers, and you get a total proposed expenditure of £13,000. In connection with this, Sir, I may, for the information of the House, first of all deal with the legal aspect of the position—the position of Solicitors, I mean, whom it is proposed to appoint. I may say that the total sum paid from 1887–88 to 1892–93 for legal expenses in New Zealand amounts to £48,324 17s. 11d., an average of some £7,204 per annum. So that honourable members will see that, while under this Bill I have named an amount of £7,000 a year as the cost of Solicitors for carrying on the neces-

sary legal business of the Aid to Settlers Office and other Government departments in the colony, the colony has already been paying more than the amount I have named in this Bill. I wish honourable members to clearly understand that. As against this £7,000 which it is proposed to incur under this Bill for legal expenses, I want to put the other side of the matter in so far as the fees to the department are concerned. We will take one item, £1,500,000 of advances, which it is not, I think, unreasonable to assume will be advanced within a reasonable time. Now, Sir, for the purposes of calculation, let us suppose that the average of small and large loans is £1,000. But you can take any average you like under the scale of fees to be payable, and the result will come out very nearly equal to what I shall state it to be. If you look at the fees at the back of the Bill you will find that they range for this purpose from 10s. up to a guinea. Consequently I take a guinea for the purpose of arriving at this calculation, and if I took up the smaller amount of 10s. it would come out the same. Now, I am taking an average of £1,000. The fees payable to the department for £1,500,000 upon an average loan of £1,000 each would amount to about £15,000 per annum for legal expenses alone. Now, dealing with the question of Valuers, I also call the attention of honourable members—

Sir R. STOUT.—Did the honourable gentleman say “loans of £1,000 each”?

Mr. WARD.—I said, Averaging £1,000 out of a total of £1,500,000; and the fees would amount to about £15,000 per annum.

Sir R. STOUT.—£1,500; not £15,000. You have multiplied it by 10. You said £1,000 mortgages.

Mr. WARD.—No; I said, if the advances averaged £1,000. Now, Sir, I wish to point out to the House that the services of these officers would also be available for the conduct of the various other businesses which the Government is carrying on in the different parts of the colony, and a considerable saving to the colony would be made in that respect. I think, myself, that the House will recognise that it is very important, in connection with the administration of an office such as this is, where the interests of so many thousands of people will be involved in the future, that the department itself should be a department that to a large extent is self-contained. It ought to be a department guided and administered in such a way that nothing like undue influence of any description will be brought to bear to obtain loans by people who ought not to obtain them, or to press upon the department undesirable securities. I pass on to the proposed system of obtaining the money. If honourable members will refer to the Bill they will see that it is intended to adopt two systems—that of obtaining loans by the issue of stock to the extent of a million and a half, and, in addition to that, the dual proposal is to issue land bonds. Now, I understand some doubt has arisen as to the meaning of section 85 of the Bill—the section

under which agents have authority to delegate their powers in connection with the raising of loans. I wish to point out to honourable members that this is the law as it exists in connection with the obtaining of loans under the ordinary Acts of the colony; and it is a necessity, because at any time an emergency may arise in connection with the raising of loans in England owing to the death or illness of one of the original Agents, and it would become necessary for the Agents at Home to re-delegate to some one else to act at once. In this respect no alteration is made, and with reference to the proposal to obtain £1,500,000 the system of obtaining the ordinary loans of the colony has been closely followed out. If it is found in practice that it is desirable to obtain the money by the issue of £1,500,000 of stock, of course in the accounts at the end of the year the public indebtedness would appear to be increased by the amount raised in this way. I may inform the House that I am strongly inclined myself to favour the alternative system proposed in the Bill, and I firmly believe that in operation it will be found to work out successfully, and that it will be found to be more in accordance with the financial conditions of the colony to adopt what is referred to in the Bill as the land-bond system. These land-bonds would be issued against special mortgages, and they could, in the ordinary course, be transmitted to England; and I may state that, apart from their being handed to the people from whom the money is obtained, or sold upon the market in the ordinary way, I would point out another advantage which this system has. In the first place, it would be a better stock, in my opinion, than even the stock of the colony would be, and would be more readily sought after than the stock of the colony. It would be ear-marked by the particular security on which it was advanced, and then it would be an improving security, because from year to year the value of the security would be increasing to the holder or the buyer by the accession of the 1 per cent. provided to be paid half-yearly, and, in addition to that, the colony would be at the back of the whole concern. So that, while it would be a negotiable security for any one to hand about on the market in England, it would, in addition, have the amount of the security included in the land-bond, the guarantee of the State at the back of it, and from year to year the holder of it would know that his security was being improved by the payment of 1 per cent. to the Assurance Fund. Moreover, I believe if this system is adopted the colony may very readily transmit its interest to England in the form of these land-bonds. There is nothing to prevent £1,500,000 of land-bonds being sent away to meet interest in England. That is an additional advantage to which, I may say, I attach considerable importance. Now, Sir, I propose to refer to the manner in which it is intended to make advances under this Bill. The lowest amount is to be £50, and the highest amount £5,000. I think there can be very little difference of opinion as to the

propriety of having a low minimum to enable the class of small settlers intending to go upon the land, as well as to enable the existing small settlers, to avail themselves of the advantages which the Bill is intended to confer. There may be a difference of opinion as to the maximum amount being fixed at £5,000; but I wish to point out that for the successful working of an institution such as this it will be necessary to have some of the larger class of securities as well as the medium and smaller ones. Some of the best securities we have in the colony perhaps range from £2,000, £3,000, £4,000, and £5,000, and yet in contradistinction to the other lending institutions of the colony all Government departments have this limit of £5,000, and therefore the other lending institutions get these higher securities, lending on the value of the securities as they commend themselves to their judgment even up to the extent of £20,000 or £30,000. It is not intended to depart from the £5,000 limit so far as this Bill is concerned; but still, from the purely lending point of view, this was a difficulty which was found to be injurious to those other institutions, seeing that they could not carry on quite so successfully as they would be able to do if not limited in this way. I think in this case the maximum of £5,000 is a right and proper one to lay down. Now one word about the proposal to advance up to two-thirds of the value of securities. There is great diversity of opinion as to the expediency or wisdom of doing this. My own opinion is that if you limit the advances under this Bill to the same limit as that of the Government Insurance Department—namely, 50 per cent. of the value of the security—you will to a large extent reduce the usefulness of the Bill. The Government Insurance Department in this colony and the Public Trust Office continually lose many of the best securities that are offered in the colony because they are tied down to the limit of 50 per cent. Another very large lending institution, which has a sum averaging £1,500,000 invested in this colony, is not tied to the 50-per-cent. limit, and therefore obtains some of the best securities in New Zealand. I think the House will readily recognise that where there is a limit of securities such as exists at the present time, and when there are several large lending institutions in the colony to compete against, it is undesirable, when we are establishing an institution for the purpose of advancing money to settlers, to restrict advances to the 50-per-cent. limit. If we did so, many unfortunate settlers who are struggling on in this country, and badly wanting assistance, would find themselves shut out from the benefits to be conferred by the Bill. I wish, however, to impress upon the House that, while the Bill says the Lending Board may advance up to two-thirds, it is not mandatory that it should do so. You must, in such a matter as this, trust to the discretion and prudence of those who are intrusted with the working of the institution, and leave the responsibility to the men who will be put in charge. In some cases, where good security is offered to the Lending

Mr. Ward

Board, and where there is very little risk, I think it follows as a matter of business that the Lending Board, if it is doing its business judiciously, would not refuse to advance up to two-thirds of the security. On the other hand, in the case of an indifferent security, where the proposed borrower made strong representations for an advance to the full limit, I take it that, as a matter of prudence, the Lending Board would not consent to the proposal. So it will be seen that, while the Bill intends to allow the Board to lend up to two-thirds of the value of the security, it is not compulsory or obligatory for it to do so: but I think it would be a very serious mistake for the House to reduce the limit for making advances to settlers under this Bill. Another thing that honourable members must bear in mind is that in the cheapening of money in this colony there will be a general enhancement of the various securities which exist in the colony. I think that is an element which ought not to be lost sight of. In connection with the proposals to advance on leasehold there is an ever-growing change, which has been going on in the colony for some time past, in connection with the land-system of the colony. It is almost useless to ask a man to take up land upon a perpetual lease, or an eternal lease, or any lease under the Land Act, or to expect a poor man at any rate to do so, in order to make a home for himself, unless he has the wherewithal to do it. There has been distinctly a want of appreciation on the part of the various lending institutions of advances to settlers who have taken up a tenure upon the soil in this way. I take it that it is the business of the country, when it is inducing people to take up a tenure of this kind, to suggest and provide a means by which advances may be safely made so that these people can obtain the necessary money to enable them to carry on profitably the cultivation of those lands. A reference to the Bill will show that the ordinary conditions of the leasehold must be complied with—that the improvement conditions must be complied with, and that after these conditions are complied with a limit of 50 per cent. is fixed for the advances to be made by the department.

An Hon. MEMBER.—Upon what?

Mr. WARD.—Upon the value of the improvements, and the value of the lease added to the value of the improvements.

An Hon. MEMBER.—Is the unearned increment included under the limit of value?

Mr. WARD.—I think that, in the ordinary course, the Act clearly interprets its meaning, and the Lending Board will be guided by the terms of the Act. The unearned increment creeps into almost everything in connection with land-valuations or land-increases in this colony. For instance, if a man has a piece of property which he has purchased for £500, and its selling-value is increased to £5,000 by reason of the improvements made by his neighbours, and he wanted an advance upon the property, would he not be a great fool if he did not take advantage of the improvements that were

being made by his neighbours to get an advance commensurate with the unearned increment?

Mr. BELL.—But it is the leaseholder you were talking about.

Mr. WARD.—Well, there is an unearned increment for the leaseholder as well. There has been, I think, a general desire in connection with this proposal that the margin should be a safe one, and that the system should be a safe one in the general interests of the colony. Now, Sir, I invite the closest scrutiny of the proposals contained in the Bill, and I say that any impartial man who will investigate them for himself will see that every necessary safeguard is taken. I will point out what the position is. I will show that, so far as concerns the proposals contained in the Bill, there is no lending institution in the colony at the present time which will be able to accumulate anything like a reserve to give an assurance fund to provide for loss and depreciation of securities that will be as great as under the scheme contained in this Bill. If honourable members refer to the table at the back of the Bill they will find that every half-year a man pays at the rate of 5 per cent. interest on his loan—that is to say, 2½ per cent. for the half-year—and then, over and above this, he has to make a payment of 1 per cent. per annum to the repayment fund. The limit for the duration of the loan is thirty-six and a half years. That is necessary under this system; but it does not follow, because a man has obtained a loan for thirty-six and a half years, that it must necessarily endure for that time, if he has sooner provided for the payments towards the Assurance Fund that are set forth in the Bill. If he is prepared to pay in any less number of years a sufficiency of money to extinguish the loan he can get a discharge of the mortgage. He need not allow it to go on for the whole thirty-six and a half years if it suits his purpose better to pay it off sooner. The scheme set forth in the Bill will be found to make it easy for the poor settler to obtain a loan, and it will enable him also to pay it off by easy stages, and, at the same time, he will all the time be bettering his position, and the security as well, by the improvements he is able to put upon his property. Now, in addition to this repayment at the rate of 1 per cent. per annum, which is to go towards extinguishing the loan in thirty-six and a half years, you will have observed that under this Bill there is an absolute safeguard provided in the fact that one-tenth of all the interest received by the Advances to Settlers Office is to be applied to an Assurance Fund, and this one-tenth of the interest, as it is received, is to be handed over to the Public Trust Office and invested by that office at the highest rate of interest: and here I may tell the House that 4 per cent. is the highest rate that ought to be paid. This is one-tenth of the interest received from the payment of interest at 5 per cent. on the £1,600,000. That is to say, the £1,600,000 will, at 5 per cent., produce £75,000 a year. One-tenth of this £75,000—namely, £7,500—is to be paid specially into a

reserve fund, or Assurance Fund, for the purpose of creating a fund from which losses or depreciation of securities can be provided for. After that, the expenses incidental to the management of the office itself have to be met out of the receipts, and this will be amply provided for out of the 1½ per cent., which represents the difference between the 3½ per cent. which the colony pays for the money and the 5 per cent. interest which the borrowers will pay for its use. I take it, Sir, that honourable members will agree, inasmuch as it is not intended to create an independent department for carrying on the business of this office—when they know that for the working of this Board we intend, in the interest of the colony, to utilise the Government offices that are already in existence—that any useless expense will not be incurred. The actual expense of carrying on the Public Trust Office last year amounted in round numbers to £8,000; consequently, if the whole management of that department only comes to £8,000, when we know we are not going to create an independent department for carrying on the business of this office, £8,000 would be an excessive amount to put down for the expenses of the department; and, for the purpose of feeling absolutely safe on that head, we put those expenses down at £5,000. I do not believe it will cost anything like £5,000 under the system which we are going to carry out. We have every reason to think it will come out all right. In the first place, we shall have at our disposal 1½ per cent., equal to £22,500 every year from the £75,000 of interest which will be produced from the £1,500,000 at 5 per cent., the other £52,500 being left to pay the 3½ per cent. on the money obtained by the State. As I have said, one-tenth of the £75,000, or £7,500, will be paid into the Assurance Fund, and, after that is deducted, £15,000 would be left. After we have put down £5,000 for the expenses of the department, I think I am right in assuming that at the end of the year there would be £10,000 left, which would be paid over to the Assurance Fund. Therefore, out of the £22,500 available, and after providing for the payment of the 3½ per cent. interest upon the £1,500,000, I think it is a fair thing to say £17,500 will go to the Assurance Fund. But if you like to take all the payments at 1½ per cent., and estimate the working of it for a period of ten years upon a million of money, I will point out to the House the position in which the Assurance Fund will be at that date. The 1½ per cent., if it is invested as stated, and is caused to earn 4 per cent. upon the investment in that way, in ten years, upon a million of money, would amount to £182,000. If you like to keep on the safe side and knock off £82,000, you have an accumulation at the rate of £100,000 per million invested during that time to pass to the Assurance Fund. That is a large accumulation to provide for losses in connection with this office. We have seen that the Public Trust Office, with advances amounting to nearly £1,500,000, lost only £2,000; and

that in the Government Insurance Office—that is, under the new Board—with advances amounting to about £600,000, we have only lost some £1,000. I ask honourable members to apply their common-sense to the position in which this Assurance Fund would be in ten years from now. I say that when we provide £100,000 towards the Assurance Fund, as against the losses, which are only £2,000 under that system—

An Hon. MEMBER.—On a 50-per-cent. margin?

Mr. WARD.—Yes, on a 50-per-cent. margin: and that has been very much against the Government Insurance Department. I say it has, and can give instance after instance where it has been so. But I wish to point out this important fact in connection with these proposals: that, so far as the bad and doubtful debts are concerned, there is no lending institution in the colony at the present time—the Public Trust, the Insurance, or the Australian Mutual Provident Society—where the interests are so thoroughly safeguarded as under this Bill. And, in addition to that, it must be remembered that in ten years 10 per cent. of the total amount of the loan, at the rate of 1 per cent. per annum, would be repaid by the different borrowers, and that that would provide for the ultimate safety of the mortgage in a way that must commend itself to members of the House. In addition to that, in discussing this important matter, I would point out that this Aid to Settlers Office is unlike a private lending institution. What is the difference? It is this: If the private lending institutions of the colony, which have been making advances from time to time, had done as the Aid to Settlers Office will be compelled to do, and if they had not used their profits for paying dividends, and for paying away surplus profits to the owners of the institutions, instead of having made heavy losses they would now have been in a thoroughly solvent position. That is another element of safety in connection with the proposal, when we come to adopt the system of making Government advances to settlers. There is a feature, however, in this cheap-money scheme which I think must commend itself to every one. It is an inducement to the thrifty to contribute to the repayment of the moneys which have been borrowed, quite independently of the compulsory side of the proposal. In addition to making the ordinary contribution of 1 per cent., which they are compelled to do, they may, if they have a five-pound note to spare at any time, make a payment into the Aid to Settlers Office, and they may make the payment in any post-office where the Superintendent and the Postmaster-General may agree that these payments are to be made. For instance, it would not be right to expect them to be made at post-offices where there are not responsible people, or where there are not money-order offices, but they can be made in any post-office in the colony which may be agreed upon as one at which payments may be made. As soon as that £5 is paid into the department it at once com-

Mr. Ward

mences to bear interest on behalf of the person who pays it in. The necessity for that is obvious. In the first place, he is paying interest on the £5 himself. Although he has paid it in he is paying interest to the department on the thirty-six and a half years' proposal, and you could not have the system work out satisfactorily unless you compelled him to pay 5 per cent. year after year. From the moment he makes these payments into the office he gets interest from the department, and the interest accumulated upon these payments bears interest in the ordinary course.

An Hon. MEMBER.—At what rate?

Mr. WARD.—At 4 per cent.

An Hon. MEMBER.—The same as the Savings-bank.

Mr. WARD.—Yes; the same as the Savings-bank. There is also an effort in this Bill to have simplicity in connection with mortgages. I may state that the object of the Government is not to interfere with the private business of any one. So far as this financial department is concerned, the Government recognise that, if this business is to be a success, the system which exists in the colony of high procuration-fees will have to be done away with, and that it is their business, in establishing such a large system as this is, to make provision by a cheapening in every direction that the settlers may require, in order that they may avail themselves of the advantages of this department. In connection with this, I may say that those who desire to obtain mortgages under it, instead of signing mortgages in the ordinary way, sign what is termed a mortgage-docket, which can be seen in the schedule at the back of the Bill. That docket will bind them just in the same way as if they signed all the conditions of an ordinary mortgage, and the whole of the conditions of an ordinary mortgage are combined in it. That is for the purpose of simplicity and security. The whole of the operations of the department are to be brought under the surveillance of the Controller and Auditor-General. Everything done is to be subject to the check of the Audit Office in the usual way. That is a matter of importance, because this will be a very important department, carrying on operations in which various people will be concerned in all parts of the country; and I think, in this respect, every safeguard has been taken. Then, again, you will observe in the Bill that it states, so far as debentures are concerned, that these may be issued at a price not exceeding 4 per cent. I want to point out that it is not intended to obtain any loans such as are contemplated by the million-and-a-half proposal at a higher rate than 3½ per cent.

An Hon. MEMBER.—Then, why say 4 per cent.?

Mr. WARD.—I will tell why that is a necessity. Now, that laugh shows me clearly that those honourable gentlemen do not understand very much about it. I have told the House this evening that I personally, and the Government also, incline strongly to the land-bond system; and, if we are going to issue land-

bonds upon individual securities, we will not raise the £1,500,000 in the way proposed in Part I. at all if we can avoid it. But if we are able to make advances to the extent of £200,000, £300,000, or £400,000 by the issue of land-bonds, you would, perhaps, for three or six months, until you sold the land-bonds in England, require a temporary advance for that time. Now, those honourable members know just as well as I do that, if you want to obtain a few hundred thousand pounds for a few months for such purposes as I have been referring to, you would require to pay 4 per cent. for it. That is why the 4-per-cent. rate is put in the Bill. That is the sole reason why it is put in the Bill.

Mr. BELL.—You have the hypothecation clause.

Mr. WARD.—That is for a different purpose altogether; but, if the honourable gentleman wants me to refer to that clause, I shall refer to it with the greatest pleasure, because I can assure him that is why the 4 per cent. is put in. The Colonial Treasurer has power under this Bill to advance money out of the Consolidated Fund to the Aid to Settlers Office to enable it to carry on its ordinary business until repayment could be made. The country would not advance to the office in the ordinary course, because it is only right, if it requires temporary accommodation, that it should pay the ordinary amount of interest for it, and recoup itself out of its earnings. While it is intended that the Aid to Settlers Office shall be really a genuine help to settlers, it is not intended that it shall be used for the purpose of making losses to the State, or be allowed to do so, and in that respect it is safeguarded in a way which ought to commend itself to members of this House. The penalties provided in this Bill for the misbehaviour of officers are dismissal, and in certain cases imprisonment. I think that in certain cases this is necessary. Where important interests are involved it is right and proper that those carrying out the duties connected with the office should have their integrity to the public more than ordinarily assured. This, therefore, is an important provision, and the alternative of imprisonment has been put in advisedly. I wish to tell the House that upon this question of the employment of legal officers and the employment of Valuers the Government are quite prepared to have both these points fairly and fully discussed. We do not want, I may say, in connection with the matter, to compel members to accept in their entirety the proposals we have made. If it is thought desirable when in Committee that the officers appointed in either of these cases should be allowed to engage in other businesses, that is open to fair and reasonable consideration. The point, I think, is fairly debatable, and is one upon which discussion should take place. The Government, having carefully considered the matter, thought it better to make their services exclusively attachable to this office; but there are many strong reasons that may be urged to the contrary, and the point is one the Government

are quite prepared to discuss when in Committee. I may say there have been, in connection with this cheap-money scheme, many representations made to the Government by men who are anxious that the Government should undertake this function. It is very painful to have to state to the House that many settlers, and intending settlers, have made the strongest representations to the Government in order to induce them to provide a scheme such as that now submitted to the House. I can assure the House that it is a necessity. We all know, so far as the uses of money are concerned, when it comes to the matter of a fixed loan upon land it ought to be at the lowest rate of interest existing in the colony. Land is an immovable security, and an immovable security always takes first place. It is to intending settlers, at any rate, a most important part of their business that in the first instance they should pay only a low rate of interest upon a mortgage to which they are tied for some time. It is a usual thing for them to pay higher rates of interest for money for the purpose of carrying on their ordinary operations, because by degrees they may be able to wipe that out—say, by the sale of stock and produce; but, when it comes to a fixture on their home, that is a most important part of their business, and every man in the colony is anxious to see a lowering of the rates of interest effected. It must be remembered that the effect of the Government doing this will be to compel all the lending institutions in the colony to follow if they desire to hold their own. The Government do not want—nor, if they wanted, is it likely to be done—they do not want to obtain the whole of the financial business of the colony. Nothing of the kind. If when these proposals are really in live and active operation the ordinary lending institutions will step in and make advances on lands as the Government proposes to do, by all means let them do it: we are anxious to see a general reduction in the rate of interest, for the benefit of the people of the colony. I want to point this out to the House: You have heard it said that this proposal will be injurious to the credit of the colony. I wish to ask honourable members if it was injurious to the credit of England when the Home Government decided to make the large advances they did to the Land Commissioners for advances to the tenants of Ireland.

90. When those millions of money were taken from the Exchequer for advances to settlers, did we hear any cry of that sort in England? Never. I say that every country in the world at the present moment is directing its attention to the solution of the very matter we are engaged in now, and I venture to say that there is no civilised country but will, before many years are passed, have adopted some system similar to ours. I dare say some of them will copy our system, as we know countries have copied us in other things in the past. Let me refer for one moment again to the amount that would be payable by legal fees to the department.

I think I have stated that this would amount to about £15,000 a year, but I find, on looking at my notes, that I should have stated £1,500. Sir, it is not at all unusual, I think, in quoting figures hurriedly from one's notes, to accidentally misread them, and that is what happened on this occasion. And I may say that the correctness of the figures seemed to be emphasized by the fact that honourable gentlemen on that side of the House agreed with me, so that I did not take the trouble to look again. However, I wish to point this out: that this proposal, even if it were going to cost £7,000 a year for legal expenses, would be distributed over all Government departments, and the total legal expenditure would not be increased, and the money scheme must improve the whole business of the country in the way I have suggested. I may further add that since these proposals have been before the country it is wonderful what a good effect they have already had. There has been a proposal to send to New Zealand £140,000 from London, from one firm alone, at the rate of 5 to 6 per cent. There are also people in the colony who were not at all anxious formerly to lend their money at that rate who are now very anxious to do so; and I say that that augurs well for the effect this is going to have in the future on those fortunate possessors of large sums of money. I only wish to say, in conclusion, that my honest and firm conviction in connection with this matter is that it is calculated to do more good to this colony than any other proposal that has been brought down for many years. There are at the present time in the colony a considerable number of persons now paying excessive rates of interest, who, if they had an opportunity of getting money at low rates of interest, as provided in this Bill, could apply it well, and put their shoulders to the wheel and make homes for themselves. Sir, I invite the fair, impartial, and honest consideration of both sides of the House to this important measure, believing, as I do, that it is calculated to add to the progress, happiness, and prosperity of the people of this colony.

Mr. G. HUTCHISON.—Sir, the House has listened to the speech of my honourable friend with all that interest which attends an entirely new departure. Although this Bill emanates—in name, at any rate—from the Budget which my honourable friend delivered some weeks ago, there is very little to identify it with the proposals then made. We have listened here to-night to an entirely new Financial Statement on the subject of "Cheap Money" to settlers; and any who may have the temerity to criticize it are to be condemned in advance as persons who are presumably interested in objecting to this measure which my honourable friend has submitted to the House. Those who will criticize it, as I dare say some will, must run the risk of that detraction. Sir, we are, I believe, all, without exception, interested in getting some scheme set afloat which will have the effect of cheapening money in New Zealand. Surely none but the most narrow-

Mr. Ward

minded persons could possibly wish for a continuance of a state of things under which money is at an artificially high rate of interest. I can understand none but the most narrow-minded, selfish, absentee capitalist desiring the continuance of such a state of things. Cheap money means prosperity to all branches of industry, to every walk of life, and, if we can attain that object by such a measure as my honourable friend has introduced, then welcome to the project. But, Sir, we here have a duty to perform to the people of New Zealand in narrowly scrutinizing the details of this measure, which is wholly different from the proposals on the same subject in the Budget. My honourable friend may, I think, confidently anticipate that he will be assisted by other members of this House to make the details of this Bill manageable, and the scheme itself a safe one. But before referring to the details I would point out that the honourable gentleman has made an important admission. He says this is a necessity. He says it has become a necessity because the rates of interest have been going up and capital has become more reluctant. That is exactly what many members on this side of the House have been saying for the last three years, and yet we have been denounced as detractors and Jeremiahs. Now the confirmation comes from the Treasury benches. The experience of the colony has been that the policy of the Ministry of the day has largely influenced this result—that of increasing the rates of interest and making capital reluctant to invest. It is also admitted that financial difficulties have been affecting the various lending institutions. The want of confidence evinced by capital has, indeed, affected every branch of business. And I cannot but suppose that the untoward events which we have seen this session have been caused, not directly perhaps—for we cannot always trace a direct connection—but they certainly have indirectly been caused, to a large extent, by the policy of change and experiment which has emanated from the Treasury benches during the last three years. Yet we have been told that we were unpatriotic and that we were carping in the criticism which we offered. I thank my honourable friend now for his justification of all that has been said during the last three years from this side of the House. I propose now to refer to some of the details of this measure; and perhaps it would be convenient that we should try to trace the various steps of a proposal to borrow under the machinery set up in this Bill. We will assume that an application is sent in to the District Board; that the valuation is made, and the application, with the valuation, is sent to the General Board, which we will assume approves of the application. The Superintendent then issues a request to the Colonial Treasurer, who in turn may issue land-bonds for the amount desired to be borrowed. These land-bonds my honourable friend has described as securities to be issued in the colony, but intended to be afterwards traded off in London. The crudities of this Bill and the scheme are as yet consider-

able. My honourable friend has altered his scheme entirely from the time when he introduced his Budget, and has apparently again altered it from the time when, four weeks ago, he gave notice for leave to introduce a Bill intended possibly to operate in the same direction, but with a different title. The course of change is not yet over, for he will have to amend his present Bill in some very important particulars. For instance, he will have to alter the form of the land-bond, for he will not, I suppose, expect that he can sell land-bonds in London in the form which is prescribed in the Sixth Schedule of the Bill. The form expresses that the money is to be repaid at the Treasury in Wellington, and the interest is also expressed to be payable there or at any money-order office in the colony. The scheme is certainly very crude as yet; but I assume that the Treasurer is going to proceed on the lines he has indicated in his speech to-night, so that he must make the land-bond payable in London, and the interest also payable there. But I pause here now to ask, is the honourable gentleman sure that he will be able to sell 3½-per-cent. land-bonds in the London market at par?

Mr. WARD.—Yes.

Mr. G. HUTCHISON.—He says he is sure of that. Probably he is arguing on quotations which a few months ago were certainly very cheering to us in the colony, but these have gone down very considerably since the Financial Statement was delivered and the banking legislation passed by this House.

Mr. WARD.—That is not so.

Mr. G. HUTCHISON.—My honourable friend says No. Perhaps, Sir, he will give us authoritative communications on the subject; and undoubtedly all the probabilities, and all the quotations that have reached us by last mail, have been in the direction I have indicated. But suppose, now, that these bonds are offered in London at 3½ per cent. this year or next year—£1,500,000 of them—and the same amount the following year, and a similar amount the next year, and so on: does he suppose that these bonds are going, year after year, to be quoted at par to the extent of a million and a half each year? I think he must be most sanguine if he so thinks. He says that the process of redemption year by year will increase the security of those who purchase. But my honourable friend will not for a moment suggest that purchasers of bonds in London would take any trouble by inquiring as to what particular lands have been mortgaged as security for the bonds that are offered for sale. There is no mention of any particular security on the face of the bonds; and, even if there were, investors on the other side of the world would not look to those particulars, but would treat the land-bonds merely as securities of the Colony of New Zealand. The honourable gentleman also said that they were ear-marked; but that is a mere supposition. The capitalists in London would not care for that,—the bonds would only be considered as bonds of New Zealand. Following out the procedure under this Bill, it will be seen that there is absolutely no

special security for the land-bonds at all. I assumed that they are to be issued as 3½-per-cent. bonds, and that those who have money to lend would buy these bonds, repayable thirty-six and a half years hence. At the same time, as indicating that his invitation to investors may not be responded to promptly, the honourable gentleman proposes to make advances against these bonds out of the Consolidated Fund. That is a most serious proposal for the Treasurer to make. It means that taxation is to be levied on the people of the colony, out of which amounts are to be paid against these bonds which are expected to be floated ultimately on the London market. Supposing that advances are temporarily made out of the Consolidated Fund—and that is a most improper source, I submit, from which to take money for the purpose—and supposing that the land-bonds are ultimately disposed of on the London market, and the temporary advance repaid to the Consolidated Fund,—what will happen afterwards with reference to the moneys which are to come in every half-year from the borrower? The money is repayable under two heads. It is repayable as interest, and as principal—5 per cent. as interest, and 1 per cent. on account of the principal. Out of the interest, one-tenth is to be taken to form an Assurance Fund. I pass on to deal with the 1 per cent. that is in reduction of principal. Honourable members will do well, I think, to carefully read the sections that deal with this subject. They are sections 62 and 63. The first of these, dealing with the principal moneys advanced from the Debenture Fund, says,—

“(1.) All repayments of such principal moneys shall be paid over to the Public Trustee for investment as a sinking fund, called the ‘Debenture Sinking Fund.’

“(2.) The interest earned by such sinking fund shall be payable to the Superintendent, but the capital shall be held and retained by the Public Trustee at the disposal of the Colonial Treasurer towards redemption of the bonds issued under Part II. of this Act.”

That Part II. deals with what is called debenture-capital, which, in more popular terms, might be called the moneys which are to be raised by loan in London at 3½ per cent.; although there is also authority given which, I understand from my honourable friend's later explanation, is an authority only intended for temporary use—that is to say, the bonds may be hypothecated in London at a rate not exceeding 4 per cent., but only for temporary purposes so that the Treasurer may eventually sell these land-bonds with a currency of thirty-six and a half years, bearing 3½ per cent. interest. But what is to be done with the instalments of principal repaid by the mortgagor in the colony? That question is answered by section 63, which goes on to say,—

“(1.) All prescribed half-yearly instalments thereof shall be paid over to the Colonial Treasurer, who shall apply the same in redeeming land-bonds in

manner to be provided by regulations under this Act, and in the meantime shall credit the Superintendent with interest thereon at the rate of three pounds ten shillings per centum per annum."

I ask the attention of the House to this: that the redemption-payments are to be at the disposal of the Colonial Treasurer. No doubt the section also says that instalments are to be applied in redeeming land-bonds. But the land-bonds are not redeemable for thirty-six and a half years. What will the Treasurer do with the money in the meantime? The section no doubt says he is to deal with it according to "regulations," but we are not given in the slightest degree any hint as to how these regulations may be framed. Under these regulations the Colonial Treasurer may treat this 1 per cent.—which would amount in the first year to £15,000, accumulating in the second year to £30,000, and so on at the rate of £15,000 a year—for unknown purposes during the long period of time these land-bonds are current. They will be in the hands of persons in London, who had bought them chiefly because they are fixed securities for a long period. What is to be done with the money to be received as redemption payments in the colony each year? I desire to point out how dangerous it would be to leave in the hands of any Treasurer undefined power over the large annual repayments. My honourable friend must admit such control is undesirable, for this scheme must go on, if the Bill is passed, for a considerable number of years, during which my honourable friend cannot in his most sanguine moments expect to continue Colonial Treasurer. This House ought to be very jealous, in so far as it gives power to Colonial Treasurers for thirty-six years and a half, which is to be the earliest period at which the bonds are to be redeemable, over money accumulating in their hands, to be used, possibly, for unknown purposes.

Mr. WARD.—Why should we not buy land-bonds ourselves?

Mr. G. HUTCHISON.—That has not generally been considered a very moral mercantile transaction. We have heard it condemned—although I do not consider that, in the special circumstances, it was a proper subject of condemnation—in the case of the Taranaki Harbour Board buying up its own bonds. Such a course has been condemned very strongly by some high financial authorities. I point out the undefined power of the Treasurer to deal with these repayments, as a matter which it will be well to make quite clear. It is desirable that the money be not used for purposes that might not be such as would, if submitted in the ordinary way, receive the approval of the House. We ought, I think, in this matter, as it is a large order extending over a number of years, to be very careful that the utmost security is given to the colony—for it is the colony, after all, which has to bear the brunt—that the loan-money lent out shall be repaid in due course, and in

the meantime invested so as to be available as a sinking fund for the redemption of the land-bonds. My honourable friend the Colonial Treasurer has spoken also of the securities to be accepted from borrowers under the proposals of this Bill. I do not, myself, see that there is any good objection to the proposal for lending on leasehold interests; but I do doubt the propriety of the proposal to lend on freeholds up to the limit of two-thirds value. He has instanced the experience of the Government Insurance Office, and the Public Trust Office, as proof of the safety of their investments; but, as an honourable gentleman interjected while my honourable friend was quoting his figures, these are offices which are under conditions as to lending only up to half value. What the circumstances would have been had the margin been less we cannot say. The illustrations are only proof that it is quite safe to lend up to 50 per cent., but they are not proof as to lending up to a higher percentage. My friend, while, no doubt, correct in the figures he gave as the amounts lent by these offices on mortgage, was not so explicit as he might have been in indicating what they meant. He said the Public Trust Office had lent half a million of money, and the Government Insurance Office had lent more than £700,000. That is right, I presume, as indicating the gross sums these offices have lent since they started in business, but they are not the figures which represent the present mortgage securities held by those offices.

Mr. WARD.—Gross.

Mr. G. HUTCHISON.—I want, however, to have on record the amounts which are at present outstanding on land mortgages; they are, I believe, as follow: Government Insurance Office, £498,145; Public Trust Office, £289,680—amounts which, I may be permitted to say, are greatly under the amount these offices should lend on land-mortgage. If the amounts were largely increased the change would help to strengthen those offices, and render better and more satisfactory returns to the investors and policyholders. I find that the action of the Treasury in connection with those offices which are dominated by the Treasurer has during last year been such as to make the House rather distrustful of unlimited powers being given to departments that are governed practically by the Treasury: I find that the total moneys taken from those departments and invested in Government securities stood on the 31st March at over three and a half millions, the exact figures being £3,648,217.

Mr. WARD.—You said that was taken during the last twelve months.

Mr. G. HUTCHISON.—I said that was the amount outstanding on the 31st December in connection with three departments—the Post Office, the Government Insurance Office, and the Public Trust Office—and represented by Government bonds. The increase in the indebtedness of the Government upon paper to these three departments during the past year was £574,115; so that, on the basis of the securities that these offices held during the

Mr. G. Hutchison

previous year, although interest may be said to have been paid by the Treasury, it was paid in paper, and these offices were further subjected to demands by the Treasury to the extent of three or four times more than the amount for interest. If that money had been lent to the settlers of the colony there would have been no need for this species of borrowing proposed by my honourable friend. We find that more than half a million has last year been taken from those offices; which money, if lent to the colonists of New Zealand at rates, we will say, of 6 per cent.—for I understand the present rates rule from 6 to 7 per cent.—would have gone far to mitigate the evils which my honourable friend claims as justification for this measure. And those offices would become stronger—there would be more confidence attaching to them in the future—if their money were invested in such a way as I describe; and there should be no difficulty whatever in those offices having funds available for such a purpose. I say that the whole of those three and a half millions, represented by Government bonds at 4 or 4½ per cent., could, by a judicious process of unloading, be realised on the London market, and the proceeds made available for lending in the colony. I cannot conceive how a scheme which means depreciation of the securities of New Zealand on the London market, and which will incidentally depreciate the credit of the colony in all its mercantile dealings with the Old Country, should be had recourse to when such an easy, obvious, and desirable course is open to the Government as the realisation of the stocks held by the three great lending departments. No one can suppose that a loan Bill such as this is, of unlimited amount,—for there is no limit to the number of years in which a million and a half may be raised,—can be other than disastrous to public and private credit. Compared with such a proposal as this, any scheme which will meet the needs of the settlers, such as suggested by myself, would, I believe, be very much preferable. I can only suggest to my honourable friend that if he would raise the rate of interest upon those land-bonds to 4½ or 5 per cent., and use the moneys in the three lending departments for the purpose of unloading such of those Government stocks as may be required, the honourable gentleman would have all that he needs—all that the settlers of the colony need—without dislocating the credit of New Zealand on the London market. I suggest these points to my honourable friend with every desire that we should have cheap money in this colony, and with no desire but that this colony shall have all the blessings which, I believe, will follow in the train of such a reform as my honourable friend has advocated to-night.

Dr. NEWMAN.—As nobody seems anxious to get up, I should like to say a few words on this Bill. The honourable gentleman who introduced the measure has, I am afraid, so much work to do that he really has not had time to study this Bill. The honourable gentleman is amalgamating banks, and he babbles of mil-

lions. It reminds me of something connected with my own profession when a man is suffering from a certain disease, and who babbles of millions; and there is this resemblance between the cases: that they both babble of millions and there is no cash. It must be admitted that my honourable friend brings down Bill after Bill; but they are all words—there is no cash behind them. It reminds

9.30. me very much of the man whose great idea of paying off a debt was that, whereas some people called a certain coin a farthing, he called it a shilling, and so palmed it off on the public. The honourable gentleman carefully goes back to Silesia in 1770: he might have gone to Esthonia, and Livonia, and Desse-Anhalt, and he would find a similar system common in all of them. The honourable gentleman talks of all these places, but I should like to draw the attention of the House to one place he has not named. This Bill is very largely a simple copy of the Victorian Bill which was introduced the other day. The honourable gentleman evidently got a copy of it and has copied it. If honourable members will look at the schedule here, with the payments—a sheet and a half—it is copied word for word and letter by letter from the Victorian Act of six months ago. But, like the old plagiarist, the honourable gentleman does not choose to say anything about it.

Mr. REEVES.—Have you a copy?

Dr. NEWMAN.—Yes; I have one here.

Mr. REEVES.—Then, you might let us see it; we have not seen one.

Dr. NEWMAN.—Why, Sir, it has been published in the *Australasian* and all the papers in Australia time after time, and I can assure honourable members it is the same, only altered *id. here* and there very ingeniously. It will be seen that every one of the figures in the schedule is simply and literally copied from the Victorian schedule. There is an item of £1 19s. 6d., which they call £1 19s. 5d., and the honourable gentleman carries the penny over to the other side: that is the only difference between the two schedules. Then, the honourable gentleman has got hold of this system of land-bonds; he has got hold of the word "land-bonds," and sticks to it; but his explanation shows that he knows nothing about them—he simply talks of them. What are they? They are mortgage debentures for £10; and will it be believed that he proposes these small debentures shall be sent Home to London? The whole basis of the thing is that he is going to get cheap money; he talks about 3½-per-cent. bonds floated in London. Sir, he cannot float them. The honourable gentleman cannot get money at 3½ per cent.; and when he talks of all the margin he will have for this, that, and the other he is wrong at the start. Look at the last page of the last Financial Statement; and, Sir, when the honourable gentleman tried to borrow at 3½ per cent. he had to pay £3 18s. and £3 19s. for it, and that when he only dribbled it quietly into London month by month. Does any one suppose, when we go on the London market to borrow £1,500,000,

that the next day our securities will not be largely depreciated? And this is how I think the Bill defective. This means borrowing £1,500,000 a year, and in six years we shall have borrowed nine millions, which, added to our debt, will make it tot up to fifty millions. And when we want money for other purposes we shall find the London money-market will not lend it. As a matter of fact, the other day a loan guaranteed by the colony for ten years at 4 per cent. was floated at par, the net result being that the colony, within the last two months, borrowed money at 4 per cent., and thus the thousands of pounds a year which the honourable gentleman had up his sleeve vanished. Then, this scheme will not pay working-expenses. The honourable gentleman says there will be no new department. But we are to have ten brand-new lawyers, and ten Valuers, and a lot of new clerks, and other people; and then he says he is not going to create a new department. We are going to give the lawyers £700 a year, and the Valuers £600; and I know the House almost collapsed when he talked of giving the Valuers £600. In my opinion the Valuer is much more important than the lawyer; ordinary clerks could do all the mortgaging business, but what we want is men able to prevent the country from having bad securities. The whole keynote of the success of this Bill—and it is a most momentous measure for good or evil—lies in the question whether the members on the Lending Board are wise or not. The honourable gentleman talked about what they do in Silesia, but let me point out that in the Argentine Republic, ten years ago, they started the same scheme as this of the honourable gentleman's. What were cedulas? They were land-bonds and mortgage debentures. The first thing President Rocas said at the end of his speech was that it was a momentous revolution. And what was the revolution that was accomplished? First an inflation of values to an enormous extent, and then a consequent depreciation. That was the result of it. And why? Because the system of lending so recklessly ran up prices, till everybody borrowed money, and the result was an amount of paper money that was appalling; and the consequence was that the Argentine Republic was landed in bankruptcy. I want to draw the attention of the House to another fact. As we understood this Bill at first, I took it that it was for loans to farmers—that was the keynote of the thing—to help farmers, for the production of wealth and the good of the country. But, as the word "settlers" is put in, I take it to mean all the dwellers in the towns as well; and, if a man wants to build a warehouse, he can borrow £5,000, or to build a mansion he can borrow £5,000. I take it that was not the original intention. I hope the honourable gentleman will accept a suggestion from me. If the money should run short, the first money lent should be lent to the farmers for the production of wealth, and, if there is any to spare, then let it be lent in the towns. The most important thing is that the farmers who pro-

Dr. Newman

duce the wealth should get the money first. I hope the Minister will accept the suggestion that if there is not enough money to go round the Board should lend it to the farmers first, and then to the people in the towns, and especially not to put up large buildings in towns. The Treasurer has changed the name of the Bill once; let me suggest another new name—"A Bill to smash the Lawyers of the Colony and make them bankrupt." As an alternative title I think that is not a bad one, because the result of the Bill will be that the poor lawyers will have a very bad time of it indeed. I take it some of them will not even get a living-wage if the Bill is passed: not but what they have managed to get along very well in the past. There is another thing in the Bill which is very much wanted, and I hope the Treasurer will take a note of it. In nearly all institutions of the kind in all other parts of the world they do not consider values as expressed by the land-valuers, but from the income derived. And that is the essence of lending money successfully in this way. There is not a word about that in the Bill.

Mr. WARD.—There is in the Financial Statement.

Dr. NEWMAN.—The Financial Statement, Sir, is not the law of the land. I take it the most important thing in lending money on farms is to see what the farms will bring in. In Würtemberg—the honourable gentleman quoted Silesia, and I will throw Würtemberg at him—in that country, when the bank lends money, it says, "What can be taken off the farm?" If it will bring in £100, they lend eight years' revenue on the farm, and say that is security for it. But the honourable gentleman says nothing about income. I think it should be an instruction to the Lending Board to ascertain what the land produces.

An Hon. MEMBER.—That is the business of the Valuer.

Dr. NEWMAN.—I think they ought to have strict instructions in the Bill. It is a most momentous Bill for good or evil. If we use it unwisely it will produce disaster; if wisely, it will be a very great blessing indeed. In the Victorian Act, which the honourable gentleman has largely copied, there is a clause which the honourable gentleman omitted, and which is a satisfactory one—namely, the Valuers are instructed that if the land is highly cultivated, such as an orchard or viney, they shall not lend much money on it; any improvements that are really perishable are not considered good security, and should be reduced very considerably; and the honourable gentleman should, I think, when the Bill is in Committee, take care that highly-improved properties shall not receive too much money. Then, with regard to lending money to people in townships which are called mushroom townships, they should get scarcely any advances at all. Both in the suburbs of the ordinary cities and in the smaller townships an inflation of value is followed by consequent depreciation.

An Hon. MEMBER.—How about Pitone?

Dr. NEWMAN.—Whether it is Pitone, or

Wellington, or Christchurch, or anywhere else, or the West Coast, it all comes to this: Will that town have a future or not? I take it Pitone will have a future. But I take it values are sometimes inflated both in the City of Wellington and its suburbs. Take Melbourne: it is a great city, and yet the amount of inflation there was simply ridiculous. And I can tell the honourable member for Inangahua, who is so interested about Pitone, that values about Inangahua are so depreciated that Lending Boards are not lending anything at all: in fact, the West Coast is considered very bad value for any money that can be lent on it. I do think the Treasurer, when he revises his speech, should go into the question again of the expense of the Board. He has told us there are to be ten Solicitors and ten Valuers, who are to cost £13,000; but he has left out the cost of the Superintendent, and the cost of clerks, and of travelling-expenses, and a good many other things; and, if he cannot get money at 4 per cent., I would ask, how much will the House have to contribute, or how much will the taxpayers of the colony have to contribute, to make the thing pay? Because, unquestionably, they will have to do so. The honourable gentleman says the Public Trustee of the colony had lent out so much and, as a matter of fact, the loss was only £2,000. I am a member of the Public Accounts Committee, and I think it was £8,000.

Mr. WARD.—Not on mortgage.

Dr. NEWMAN.—I was on the Public Accounts Committee last year, and I know it. We voted £7,000 on that express account. I think the honourable gentleman should take the Bill back, after it has been discussed, and consider this question. We cannot get this money at $3\frac{1}{2}$ per cent., or anything like it; and how are we going to make both ends meet? I take it we cannot do it unless the honourable gentleman asks for further taxation. I should like the Treasurer to explain how the people are going to take these land-bonds. Suppose a man comes and says he wants to borrow £5,000. The honourable gentleman offers him land-bonds at $3\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. I take it, if the man takes his land-bonds round and says to his baker, "Will you take a land-bond for £10?" the baker will say, "Yes, if you will give me discount." And if a man borrows £500 he will have to take a big discount indeed. The difficulty is, that if you take a land-bond for £10 your baker or grocer will only give you £7 or £8 for it. In Bavaria they had these land-bonds, and any one would take them at the face-value and pass them round like so many golden sovereigns. In this case they will not take them. If a farmer says, "I want £500," and you force upon him a land-bond," then the man who is borrowing the money will have to take it at a very large discount; with the result that he will not come to this lending institution at all; he will go somewhere else for it. I took the greatest trouble in reading over the Bill, and I can see no use whatever in these land-bonds as at present constituted. If the rates were to exceed $4\frac{1}{2}$ and 5, then there might be a

considerable passing round from hand to hand; but at the present time no man is unwise enough to take a bond like this and pass it on. The net result will be that he will not take it at all. I can only repeat that I regret that this Bill has to be introduced. At the same time, the policy of those honourable gentlemen during the past three years has been so ruled as to hamper all institutions. Undoubtedly money has become scarce in the colony, and it is perfectly idle to say that money can be raised on mortgage at the low rate it could be in past years.

An Hon. MEMBER.—It is cheaper now.

Dr. NEWMAN.—If it is cheaper, I will ask, why is it desired to bring in this Bill? If any one can obtain money at very low rates, why go on with this Bill? As a matter of fact, this Bill is very largely necessary because the honourable gentleman and his colleagues during the past three years have pursued a policy of hunting capital out of the colony. It is idle to deny that capital has been hunted out of the colony, and gradually withdrawn from the colony. There can be no doubt whatever that has happened; and let me tell the honourable gentlemen that if they want to have plenty of money, and plenty of cheap money, they can only get it by restoring confidence. If they will drop some of these Bills, and all this amount of paper, then confidence will be restored; but as long as we have got all the Bills we have on the Order Paper, and further borrowing schemes, and further guaranteeing, and other troubles, then money will become dearer, in spite of what is to be done by this Bill.

Captain RUSSELL.—Sir, I do not know whether to compliment the Colonial Treasurer or to pity him, for none of his large army of supporters have praised, or even dared to get up to say a word in favour of, the Bill. What the reason may be it is difficult to say, but it is possible that now those gentlemen find that the Colonial Treasurer did not understand the Bill at all when he talked about thousands when he meant hundreds in the receipts of the department. There have been several points dealt with in the debate on the Bill, and I think it is unnecessary that I should follow up those on this occasion; but there are two or three other points that I will speak upon as I progress. There is a clear contradiction between some of the paragraphs in the Financial Statement and the assertions made not long ago by the Colonial Treasurer on the second reading of the Bill. The honourable gentleman, when speaking to-night, told us that attempts to renew mortgages during the past three years had been made on much more unfavourable terms than existed formerly. As was pointed out by the honourable member for Wellington Suburbs, that can be attributable only to some particular cause, and that particular cause must be, of course, the policy of the honourable gentlemen who have occupied the Treasury benches during the past three years. I use those words advisedly, for in the Financial Statement there are some

words which go to show that money is very plentiful, and that it has been hoarded up; and, if money is so plentiful, and is being hoarded up, surely there must be some reason for it! If money is plentiful, and has been hoarded up, and not lent out during these three last years, what is the cause? The cause must be, of course, that capital has been so shaken in confidence that it prefers to hoard itself up without getting any remuneration even to allowing itself to be lent out on good, sound mortgages. I will read presently what the Colonial Treasurer said in the Financial Statement. Then, there is another point. He went on to tell the House—and this seemed to me to be of special application also to his own scheme—that many companies had got into difficulties, and had had to look after themselves. If many companies have got into difficulties during the time of their investments in New Zealand, and have had to look after themselves, how much more likely will it be that a Government investment Board will get into such difficulties, and will find that they will have to look after themselves!

Mr. WARD.—They have paid away profits.

Captain RUSSELL.—There are, or have been, of course, one or two companies that have been somewhat reckless in paying away profits in the form of large dividends; but the bulk of the loan companies conduct their business in a very reasonable way. Those companies are managed by men who are much more qualified than any Government official is likely to be. Government officials are public servants, and they do their work thoroughly well; but their business is not that of money-lenders, and they have not the knowledge of values that is possessed by practical business-men; therefore it is almost inevitable that men engaged in the business of lending money, who have not special business training, will be more likely to make a failure of this business than those men who have studied finance for many years past. Then, the Colonial Treasurer told us that there was no necessity for an independent department for the purpose of this Act, and that there would be no additional expense in administering it. Are we to believe for one instant that an investment of a million and a half a year can be made without additional expense, or that there will be no necessity for a special department? It is not as though it was going to be one solitary million and a half, but it is to be for year after year that the sum of a million and a half is to be lent out. Not only that, but I gather from the statement made this evening that the system is to be extended to small sums of repayment, which will go into account. It is an absurdity to suppose that the work of transferring this money to various accounts, and of conducting the business, will not require a very perfect form of department, and a large expenditure, to carry it on with any prospect of a reasonable amount of success. Then, the honourable gentleman told us that the loans of the Public Trustee at half-values had been very successful, inasmuch as there had been only a loss of £2,000

Captain Russell

upon advances of £500,000. That really has not anything to do with the point at issue. During many years past a safe business has been done on 50-per-cent. values, as there has been practically but little competition for that class of investment, and therefore no possibility of any loss; but, from the instant the colony lends out large sums of money on a narrow margin of values, and comes into active competition with all other loan companies, the inevitable result must be that there will be very considerable loss accruing, unless a most careful valuation is made. I know that there are not a few who think that values have come down to bed-rock prices, and this was stated in the Financial Statement; but as I go on I shall endeavour to show that bed-rock prices at the present moment have nothing to do with the subject. Even supposing that we have come down to bed-rock prices at the present moment,—many careful and reliable business-men hold an entirely different view,—but I will assume, for the sake of argument, the opinion to be right, and I shall endeavour to show that bed-rock prices have nothing whatever to do with the basis of lending money which the Colonial Treasurer is proposing here. He also told us that the District Board, or Valuers, are to be the Registrar of Deeds, the Postmaster, and the Commissioner of Crown Lands.

Mr. WARD.—As the District Board, not Valuers.

Captain RUSSELL.—The District Board must be the Valuers. I say that advisedly, because every person with a practical acquaintance with a lending board knows that it does now supervise its own valuer, or, if any board takes the valuation irrespective of any local knowledge, the inevitable result is a considerable loss. Every person understanding the business knows this to be the case, and that the essential to the conducting of a successful loan-company business is that the lending board should be able to keep in check every investment recommended by the valuers. It is a difficult task indeed to argue against such a scheme as this. We are all anxious to see the rate for money reduced. We are essentially a borrowing colony; we found our colony in a rough state; we are all anxious to improve this country, and that can only be done by means of borrowed money. Seeing that there are very few capitalists in this colony, and that all the money lent out in the colony is foreign money, it naturally follows that we are all anxious to see cheap money if we can possibly get it. Speaking with all sympathy as a farmer, I know nothing is more difficult, in the early days of colonisation, than to bring about successful farming and for the farmers to pay their way. Therefore I sincerely sympathize with the desire to endeavour to get cheap money for the farmers; but the question is, whether we are going the right way in this Bill to do it, and I doubt if it is going to do as much for the farmers as it is supposed to do. It has been said that so far back as 1877 I advocated a scheme something

like this, and I shall be pleased if I should have been the first public man in New Zealand to have thought of such a scheme; but it is not to be said that because a man urged certain views twenty years ago therefore he must do the same now, for what may have been perfectly wise and sound in 1877—I assume I did speak in that year, but I do not remember the year—but, acknowledging that I made that speech a great many years ago, it does not follow that what might have been wise then

10.0. would be sound now; for this reason: that, so far back as the year 1877, I am reported to have said that capital was practically unavailable for the development of the country. Well, presumably that was approaching the actual state of things at that time. And this must also be borne in mind: that the rate of interest was between 8 and 10 per cent. in those days. On the other hand, the rate of interest is not now anything approaching to that. The rate of interest is comparatively low in this country. Of course it may, and I hope it will, become lower, but I do not believe it will be made lower by the scheme we have in this Bill. Another circumstance which was entirely different in 1877 was that capital was not taxed as it is now, and that is a very essential element in connection with this subject. Of course the proposal to borrow £1,500,000 is very plausible, and the world has got so accustomed to listen to the jingling of millions from the honourable gentlemen who now occupy the Treasury benches that no doubt the world thinks there is something good coming from this scheme. But I am afraid such is not the case. Though at first sight it would appear that people are going to gain a great deal from this scheme, yet, from the figures that have been quoted, there is not so much to be saved to the farmer as might appear. Not only am I not anxious but I have no intention to pass indiscriminate censure upon this Bill. I give the honourable gentleman credit for having brought it in with a sincere desire to benefit the settlers; but, if we come to examine it calmly and dispassionately, to my mind there is convincing proof that there is in this scheme really little advantage to the farmers. The honourable gentleman deals with such gigantic figures that it sounds as though there was going to be some enormous saving to borrowers; but let us take the figures calmly and dispassionately and see what is the amount. I have found the actual quotation I previously referred to from the Colonial Treasurer's Financial Statement. On page 18 the Colonial Treasurer says, "that money in this colony will before long be plentiful, and that with an additional supply a drop in the interest-rates may be expected." A little further on he says, "It seems impossible for the vast accumulations of wealth now being hoarded up to continue long without being remuneratively employed." These are the words he used in the Financial Statement; and, seeing that that Statement is not only the utterance of the honourable gentleman himself, but is carefully analysed and studied

by the Cabinet, we must assume that, whilst in the Financial Statement they tell us they are going to bring down a cheap-money scheme, yet money was plentiful, and the rate of interest was soon to be reduced. What is the position at the present time? I know honourable members have an idea that loan companies are making large profits and are lending out money at very high rates of interest. But such is not the case. The average rate of money lent by loan companies is under 7 per cent., and that is a yearly-diminishing percentage; and therefore, when people have an idea that 8, 9, 10 per cent., and higher rates of interest, are being earned by loan companies they are mistaken, because, although there may be a few such cases, the average earnings are considerably under 7 per cent. If that is the case, I assume, according to the words of the Treasurer here, that we shall have money at 6 per cent. in a very short time in the colony, seeing that he tells us it is plentiful and is being hoarded up. Well, now, if that is the case, if money is approaching anything like 6 per cent., and if there is to be a further drop in interest, it is reasonable to suppose that a man who is thoroughly solvent and able to borrow money on a good margin of security will be able to get it below 6 per cent.—will be able to get it, as I know several solvent men have been able to borrow, at 5 per cent. But we will not calculate interest at 5 per cent. at present. We will assume, for the sake of argument, that a man will be able to borrow money at 6 per cent. It goes without saying that good securities are rare, and, if good securities are rare, the loan companies working in competition with the Government will take care to retain these good securities in their hands, because it is not possible to pay the mortgage exactly at the moment a man wants to pay it off. When it comes to maturity, and he has a margin to give, the loan company will take care to retain that mortgage; and the more doubtful securities, on a two-thirds margin, will go over to the Government Board, which will have to take a greater risk than the loan companies. I do not see how one can avoid that conclusion. Well, now, coming again to the assertion of the Colonial Treasurer that the average land-values have come to their bed-rock value, I said just now that that had really nothing to do with this scheme—nothing to do with the question—and I tell you how I arrive at it. I do not believe the land-values have arrived at bed-rock. We have the fact before us that one of the greatest staple industries of the colony—the frozen-meat trade—is steadily decreasing in value, and, if the grain-market keeps as it has been keeping for the past few years, it follows that the price of land must still further depreciate. But I do not attach any special reliance to that. The object, of course, of the Government in the cheap-money scheme is to "boom" the colony. The whole policy of the Government is to make money plentiful. They have said so over and over again, and that means that the colony is to be boomed. What is the first effect of a boom? It is to

send up the value of land inevitably. And then what happens? During the time there is a boom on that is the very time when land-transactions are numerous, when loans are made continually, and there are continually being made fresh advances on property. Whatever the bed-rock value of land may be at the present time, it will result that loans will be made during a time when the condition of the colony is said to be most flourishing, and therefore they will not be made at the time when land has reached the bed-rock value, but in the flowing but deceptive tide of prosperity which will submerge and conceal the bed-rock. Therefore you are not going to lend money on the bed-rock price, even supposing there may be a bed-rock value at the present moment. Of course, during times of depression the margins are more ample, and the transactions fewer; and therefore in lending, more particularly as a loan company has to lend, during times of depression, the margin is far more reliable. But, unfortunately, during times of depression, as now, there is very little prospect of property changing hands, and few investments are being made. Then, coming to the question as to whether there is a sufficient margin between the price at which we shall be able to borrow the money and the price at which it is to be lent, I am afraid the margin is not large enough. The price at which it is proposed to raise money must be contingent upon our loans being floated at par; but there is no reason to believe that we shall be able to raise our loans at par, but every reason to believe we shall not. Take the Financial Statement of this year, and it will be found the average price of conversion in February last was about 95½; and therefore, if the conversion is about 95½, we should be pretty sanguine if we imagined our loans would float at much above that price. And if, on the other hand, we continually go to the English market for fresh money, there will be a tendency to depreciate our stock, and we shall not get our money at par or near it; and I conclude it will be an impossibility to borrow money at such a price as will enable us to lend it again at 5 per cent. But, then, I shall endeavour to show that, even supposing we can lend the money at 5 per cent., the actual practical benefit to the farmer is of a very small kind indeed, for this reason. People having good security will soon be able to borrow money at 6 per cent.—they will be able, if we credit the assertion of the Colonial Treasurer, to borrow money at 6 per cent., and the interest at 6 per cent. on a million and a half is £90,000 a year, whereas the interest on a similar sum at 5 per cent. is £75,000, which is a saving, of course, of £15,000 a year on a million and a half. Now, a saving of £15,000 a year is a very nice comfortable saving to make, but not enough to insure prosperity or to avert disaster. Although it is a very comfortable sum to bring about further improvements, and is a sum which is not to be despised, yet, as a matter of fact, it will be found that this £15,000 has to be materially reduced, for this reason: The loan companies

Captain Russell

pay the land-tax, for mortgages, as everybody knows, are treated as land, and are liable to the land-tax; and therefore, as the Crown will not pay the land-tax, you have to deduct 1d. for each pound of the million and a half, or, in other words, £6,250 a year, which will under the cheap-money scheme be lost to the colony. It is now paid by the lender of the money, who, in ninety-nine cases out of every hundred, is not a person resident in New Zealand: and that reduces the £15,000 to £8,750, which is the only profit which the borrowers will make by this transaction. The lending of a million and a half sounds a great deal, but the only financial result, assuming that the money is lent at 5 per cent., is that the saving in the end comes to £8,750. The Government wants to boom, but, unfortunately, is not able to do it. You will perceive that I am right, for this reason: We have got a falling revenue, and we cannot afford to do without revenue, and the whole policy of the Government is to impose further taxation upon land; and, as the compulsory-acquisition-of-land Bill will have the effect, or presumably will have the effect, of reducing the number of large estates, again there will be a reduction in the amount of taxation which is paid by large owners of land. But, as it is certain there will not be a reduction in the taxation on land, there must be a readjustment of land-tax, with the inevitable result that it will fall upon the small farmer; and therefore, although he will apparently derive an advantage under this scheme, as a matter of fact he will have to pay more in consequence of this scheme than he has to pay at the present time. What the indirect injury may be it is impossible to know. Capital is very shy. The large institutions will always be able to take care of themselves; so that, instead of getting cheap money, the frightening-away of capital may have the effect of raising the rate of interest. The true way, it seems to me, of bringing down the rate of interest would be not to allow the Government to pledge the credit of our farmers to the English money-lender, but rather to lend out the money they derive from the Public Trust Office, from the Insurance Department, and from the Post-Office Savings-Bank,—lend it out on half-values and at a low rate of interest, so long as it did not interfere with the proper administration of the different departments. By so doing you will be able to lend at a low rate of interest on first-class securities of small farmers. That is the truest form of competition with the other institutions. You will say that it is simply impossible for the farmers to get money at a low rate of interest from the local institutions. Then bring healthy competition into play; do not bring in this scheme, but lend your money at low rates on nothing but the best form of security. Under this scheme there is a proposal to lend money upon any kind of investment, and with a thirty-six and a half years' currency. In the case of houses built of wood there is an annual depreciation in the value of the property, which will not be compensated for even by the sinking-fund that is to be created. I should like to

see any scheme which would bring down the rate of money to all persons who have good security to offer, but I cannot think that this Bill will benefit the colony.

Mr. MILLS.—The honourable member for Hawke's Bay, who has just sat down, threw out a taunt at members of this side of the House that we will not comment on the Bill now before the House. I think that taunt is unmerited, for we merely wish to hear something of the opinions of those who are expected to criticize the measure. The first honourable gentleman who stood up on that side of the House is, we know, most subtle in dealing with figures, and is quite an authority on finance, if one is to believe what one hears. But what does his criticism amount to, after all? Did he attack the principle of the Bill in any way? No, Sir, not at all. I think that is a great compliment to the Treasurer who is in charge of this Bill. In fact, to my mind, the speech in question was one of the weakest speeches I have ever heard from that honourable member, who is reputed to be the financial critic of the Opposition. Then we had the honourable member for Wellington Suburbs, and he spoke in that genial manner of his which always makes me think that he is on the wrong side of the House, and that he would feel far better if he were on this side; and, in fact, I am quite satisfied the day is not far distant when we shall see him here. I could not follow some of his arguments, although he, in giving us his opinion in reference to the cheap-money scheme, tried to make out some great points from the figures he used. I have the idea that figures in Australia are not different from those in New Zealand, although, if we are to believe the honourable gentleman, it would appear they are quite different, and there two and two do not make four. He tried to make a great deal of capital out of these figures as applied to Australia and New Zealand respectively, but, as a matter of computation, they must be the same in either case, so that his criticism was very feeble. I am not going to take up the time of the House very long, because, personally, I am satisfied the Bill provides a first-class scheme to meet the requirements of our settlers throughout the colony. The honourable member for Hawke's Bay, in his remarks, alluded to the fact of capital being locked up. Well, we must admit that capital has been locked up; but what was the first step of the Opposition when this Government took office? I am not exaggerating at all when I say that a great many of our leading political men, our best statesmen, vilified the colony in every conceivable way; and at the present time the last resource they have taken to is to lock up capital, and in that way to make people think we are on the road to destruction. But it has had this effect: It has brought this Government to face the position, and to bring down a measure which, when properly criticized and worked out in detail, will, I venture to say, get support from all the best thinking men in the colony. It will be a great boon to the

farmers especially to be delivered out of the hands of the financial agents. So far as the general principle of the measure is concerned, I think it is what the country has long required. It is quite within the knowledge of all honourable members that most of our early settlers, the old colonists, who are passing away,—most of them have passed away,—have left families not too well provided for, and, if I am asked what is the reason of this, I say emphatically it is because they had such a high rate of interest to pay for the money they had to procure to enable them to carry on their farming operations. There are hundreds of men in my mind, men of integrity, men who for years have worked early and late in the endeavour to put something by; but, the inevitable pay-day coming round every quarter or half-year, and the necessity being ever upon them to find this heavy interest at the rate of 10, or even 15, per cent. in some cases, it was impossible for them to improve their position. In many cases their property eventually passed away from them into other hands. Now, this scheme provides something which will be an effectual remedy for that kind of thing. It is intended to provide that which will be a great incentive to the struggling settler. It will afford him an easy method of effecting the reduction of the debt which he has at first incurred, until it has been quite extinguished; and that, to my mind, will do more to encourage settlement in this colony than anything else which could be devised, and will open up a better avenue for our unemployed than any other scheme that has been brought before Parliament this session, or in any previous one during the last four years. For a man can see for himself that, after steadily working year after year, he will have the opportunity that did not present itself in former days of diminishing steadily his indebtedness; for, as the Colonial Treasurer told us, after a number of years from taking up the loan, if a man has been successful enough to be able to pay off the advance made to him, he may free himself from it; and that, I say, is an additional incentive for him, probably, to assist his family to settle down in the neighbourhood, or, at any rate, to become settlers in other parts of the colony. So far as concerns this scheme having the effect of lessening the credit of the colony at Home, I differ entirely from that opinion. In fact, supposing a million and a half of money is brought into the colony, what is the result? I say that if that money is invested here there must be a corresponding number of good settlers, and the whole credit of the colony is pledged for our loans at Home. No one has ever dreamt of repudiation here. We all acknowledge that what money is borrowed is a debt of the colony, and we have not only the ordinary assets for our loans, but I take it that the bone and sinew of our colonists—men who would in many cases be able to get on their personal security a very large amount—is also pledged under the Bill, and that means a great deal. I shall not detain the House for any long time, but I hope the matter will be dealt with from both sides

of the House in a fair and equitable spirit; that each one will endeavour to amend the Bill where it may be amended with advantage, and that when it comes out of Committee it will be recognised as a good measure, quite apart from party politics.

Sir R. STOUT.—Mr. Speaker, it is very surprising to me that in perhaps the most important and certainly the most novel of the financial measures of the Government there can be so little interest taken as would appear from this debate. And it is also surprising to me that, when several speakers of the Opposition have spoken on the subject, there seems to be no reply from the Treasury benches.

An Hon. MEMBER.—There is plenty of time.

Sir R. STOUT.—Sir, the honourable member says there is plenty of time. I do not think he has been paying much attention to the debate. Now, I wish to deal as briefly as I can at this time of the evening with this Bill by pointing out what my opinion is concerning it. First, I have to say that this Bill has entirely departed from the Budget. In the Budget it was laid down that there was to be money brought from abroad to lend to our settlers. It was stated in the Budget

11.0 that the House would be asked to assent on certain conditions to legislation authorising the raising in London of any sum not exceeding a million and a half per annum, to be advanced to the settlers in this colony on freehold security, $3\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. inscribed stock to be issued from time to time to provide the requisite amount. It was said that what was necessary for this colony was the bringing-in of money from abroad in order to provide means to bring about its further development. That was the passage in the Budget dealing with financial aid to settlers. I will cite one sentence in which this is summed up; "The first essential to the successful introduction of money into the colony is to give an assurance to those from whom it is obtained that their loan is safe." Now, Sir, what is it we have now? Instead of borrowing money at $3\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. in London, we are, it seems, not only not to borrow all in London, but the London bonds are to be 4 per cent., while the New Zealand bonds are only to be $3\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. This is the provision of the Bill.

Mr. WARD.—Oh, no.

Sir R. STOUT.—Sir, I am surprised at the honourable gentleman saying "Oh, no." Has he read his Bill? The Bill is clear and precise, and I am not overstating or understating one single clause in it. If the honourable gentleman desires me to refer to the clause fixing that, I shall simply read him clause 31 of the Bill, which provides that "No bond, debenture, or other security issued under this Part of this Act"—that is, the Part of the Act dealing with the raising of the money in London—"shall be sold or otherwise disposed of at a price which will yield to the purchaser thereof a higher rate of interest by the year than four pounds for every hundred pounds of the purchase-money given for the same."

Mr. WARD.—"At a higher rate than."

Mr. Mills

Sir R. STOUT.—Yes, Sir, "at a higher rate than." Now, the honourable gentleman, when he delivered his speech, said this 4 per cent. was put in in order to allow the bonds to be hypothecated.

An Hon. MEMBER.—Hypothecated for a temporary advance.

Sir R. STOUT.—Very well; I am glad to see the House heard him as I did. Do honourable members know that under this Bill the Treasurer, if he likes, may give 8 per cent. for hypothecation? It is unlimited so far as the hypothecation of the debentures is concerned. The paying of 4 per cent. has nothing to do with it, because he may go to a bank and say, "There is a debenture for £100. I want an advance of £50 on that, and am willing to pay 8 per cent. for that advance." There is no limit whatever as to the rate of interest to be paid on hypothecated debentures. We have, therefore, in this Bill a direct departure from what is said in the Financial Statement, so far as the rate of interest is concerned. And we also have in this Bill, as I shall show, a direct departure in asking that the money shall be borrowed in this colony, and not in London, for the purpose of aiding our settlers. Now, Sir, why is there this change? Can it be that the rumour we have seen in one of the newspapers which is considered a good reliable paper—the evening paper that receives the Government advertisements in this town—can it be that this paper is correct in saying that the Agent-General has sent a wire from London that perhaps we shall not be able to get the money there at $3\frac{1}{2}$ per cent.?

Mr. WARD.—Absolutely incorrect.

Sir R. STOUT.—"Absolutely incorrect." Then why fix 4 per cent.? The honourable gentleman knows it would not be safe to fix $3\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. I will tell the House why. If honourable members take the trouble to go back, they will see that until last year we have never been able in our conversion operations to sell our Consolidated Stock at par. The result is, we have not been able, till the Cheviot-purchase debentures and one other stock-conversion transaction, to get money at $3\frac{1}{2}$ per cent.

Mr. WARD.—What about New South Wales?

Sir R. STOUT.—I have yet to learn that this is part of the Colony of New South Wales. I was talking of New Zealand. I say that, so far as we are concerned, we have never been able, except during the last year, to raise money at $3\frac{1}{2}$ per cent., and therefore there was a reference put in to 4 per cent., because it would not have been safe finance to put in $3\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. But, all the same, it is a departure from the principle laid down in the Financial Statement. Then, let me notice another departure. I am not saying whether the departure is right or wrong, but only pointing out that there is in this Bill a direct departure from the policy placed before the country by the Budget. The next is this: Before it was to be lent on freehold security; now it is increased to leasehold security. Then it was understood to be practically aid to country settlers; now

there is no such limit: so that we have these changes in the Bill from what was stated in the Budget. Now I come to another point. There has not only been a change between the Budget and the Bill, but there has been a change between the Bill and the speech. Let me point out what is an important matter in the speech that has been made to-night. The honourable gentleman has stated that one of the lending departments of the Government is to be the Board that is to manage all this business: no, not to be the Board to manage *all* the business—that is hardly correct—but one of the lending departments is to be the department that is to manage this business. Well, Sir, what becomes of the Superintendent in the Bill? Is he not to be a distinct officer?

Mr. WARD.—No. What is to prevent him from being Superintendent and having another office?

Sir R. STOUT.—I will tell the honourable gentleman what prevents it. It is section 15 of the Bill. If honourable members will take the trouble to look at section 15 they will see that the Bill entirely differs from the speech made by the honourable gentleman. In the Bill the Public Trustee is there; the Government Insurance Commissioner is there; but, in addition to these two lending officers,—there are only two lending departments of the Government,—we have got the Superintendent. Now, the honourable member did not mean to say that the Board is to consist of—what?

Mr. WARD.—Read the next clause.

Sir R. STOUT.—I will read clause 16. "The Superintendent shall be *ex officio* Chairman of the General Board; and the six persons"—

Mr. WARD.—That is 15. Read clause 16.

Sir R. STOUT.—Surely I can read clause 15 first. I am not ignoring clause 16; I will come to that. The honourable gentleman need not think I have not read the Bill. I have read every clause.

"The Superintendent shall be *ex officio* Chairman of the General Board; and the six persons holding for the time being the offices of the Colonial Treasurer, the Public Trustee, the Government Insurance Commissioner, the Surveyor-General, the Solicitor-General, and the Commissioner of Taxes shall be, *ex officio*, members of the General Board."

That means that the Board shall consist of what has been termed the perfect number—seven. Now, the honourable member did not mean that there should be only six members. It is true he goes on to say,—

"In the event of the Superintendent at any time holding conjointly any one of the other above-mentioned offices, the Governor shall appoint some other public officer to be a member of the General Board, so that the number of members may at no time be less than six exclusive of the Superintendent."

But the honourable member knows that it is not only absurd draftsmanship, but not common-sense, to say that there is to be another officer put into this Board who is not to be a separate Superintendent. I say that when the Bill was drafted it was meant there

was to be a Superintendent distinct from any of these six officers; but when the honourable member comes down now he throws over the Superintendent, and, so far as this is concerned, this clause is not properly drafted to carry out the speech which he has made to-night. Now, as I have to pass on quickly, let us see what financial soundness is in this proposal. Sir, the Treasurer has allowed nothing in his speech for the expenses of raising the loan. I submit that if you take the fact that we have never been able to raise money, excepting last year, at $3\frac{1}{2}$ per cent., the proper thing is to assume we shall have to pay 4 per cent. for that. Add to that the discount we shall have to pay for the cost of raising the loan, and we shall not get the money cheaper than 4 per cent. That will only allow us 1 per cent. of a margin between 4 and 5 per cent. I am willing, however, if necessary, to give the honourable gentleman the $\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. extra, and to show what the profit and gain is to the taxpayers of the colony first, and afterwards what it is to the borrowing settler. Let me take it from the colonists' point of view. We are now, as a colony, entering into the money-lending business, and as money-lenders we have the right to look at this thing from a purely commercial aspect. Sentiment has no place in this transaction. We are money-lenders, and must look at it entirely from that point of view. Now, let us see what will be the cost for management of the million and a half. I will take the first year. I admit that in future years the expense will be less, but I am taking it now for the first year; and I will take the estimates given by the honourable gentleman. I think they are perfectly fair. He says it will take £5,000 for office-work—that means, for district officers, clerks, telegrams, and office expenses of all kind; for Valuers and lawyers, £18,000; for Assurance Fund, £7,500. Then, as against that, he has got, we will assume, at 4 per cent. borrowing, £15,000—the difference of 1 per cent.; he has £1,575 he gets from lawyers' fees. That gives £16,575, which will show on this year's transactions a net loss of £8,925. But that is not all. The question is, Who is to pay the tax on the mortgages? At present the mortgagee pays the tax on the mortgages. Who is to pay the tax? It has to be paid either by the mortgagor or by the mortgagee. I will assume first that it is paid by the mortgagee. If it is paid by the mortgagor we have another calculation to make further on; but if paid by the mortgagee, assuming it is 1d. in the pound, there will be £6,250 of mortgage-tax, which will make a loss of 1 per cent., because it would amount to £15,175. No doubt out of that there is the Assurance Fund of £7,500. I do not think that would be too high an Assurance Fund if we are to accept the proposal to lend on city properties; and by lending up to two-thirds the £7,500 will in the end be absorbed, so that the taxpayers of the colony will have to face a loss for the first year of £15,175 on these transactions. Is that good finance? And, remember, we have assumed that this £5,000 the Treasurer has given is to include all the expenses of

offices; but, if we choose to add the extra cost that will be thrown on the Audit Department, the extra cost that will be thrown on the Agent-General's Department in London, and on other departments, I think the £5,000 was a very small sum to put it at; but I may say I have taken the honourable gentleman's figures, so that it cannot be said that I have exaggerated in the slightest degree. Well, that is the difference on the first loan. In the first year the taxpayers of the colony will have to pay for the cheap money £15,000 out of their taxation. An honourable gentleman says, "Not out of taxation." Well, if it does not come out of taxation it must be out of loan. But there is another loss.

An Hon. MEMBER.—I said, "Question."

Sir R. STOUT.—The honourable gentleman said, "Question." If he means he questions my estimate of the loss: if the honourable gentleman will show me where my figures are wrong—I have taken them from the Treasurer—I shall be glad to be corrected. I do not wish to overstate it in the slightest degree, and that is the reason why I have taken the Treasurer's figures. But that is not the only loss. There is the loss in interest, which has never been referred to by any of the speakers I have heard. I did not hear the honourable member for Patea mention it. There is the loss of interest. We have borrowed, say, a million and a half in London. I assume we have borrowed it under Part II. of the Act; I am leaving out the consideration of Part III. We have borrowed that in London, and we have got to remit the money Home. It is true, no doubt, that he will raise the money in London to pay interest in London, so as not to put expense on sending it Home; but there will be a loss of interest before investment. Every loan company knows that; and what we shall pay down leaves the very slight margin of $\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. a year on the loan-money that is raised. The time that elapses makes it sometimes 1 per cent., but we will assume $\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. a year at the least. When they get their money in London the interest has run on before they get the investment. They will have lost at least $\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. a year, though some offices put it down at 1 per cent. That would make a loss of interest for the year of £7,500. That would bring the total up to no less than £22,675 of a loss to the colony for the year. And this is to be a great gain to the colony. Well, Sir, the next thing I wish to point out is this: that there is provision made for conversion. There is to be conversion operation on the debentures which, as I assume, you raise at 4 per cent. There is also to be conversion operation on the Land Fund debentures that you raise in the colony: and now I come to deal with them, and with this conversion scheme. Conversion always costs money. Where is the money to come from? There is no provision made for that. Now I will deal with the $3\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. to be raised in the colony, and which is an entire violation of the principle laid down in the Budget. The Budget was to bring money from London to give to our settlers. Assume that

we can raise money at $3\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. here, what does it show? It shows that our enterprise is clogged, if the people of the colony are content to take $3\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. from the Government for their money instead of investing it otherwise; and I think it would be a calamitous thing for the colony if it should be said that our colonists lent money at no more than $3\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. And what will be the result of the Government drawing all this money into their hands? They will draw it out of the loan companies—they will seize a great part of the available capital in the colony, which would otherwise go to industrial enterprises. Why should we in that way injure the enterprise of our colony? By taking money in this way to lend to settlers we are not encouraging our settlers to individual exertion, or to apply their money to productive sources in every direction. We are not doing any good to the colony if we encourage this land-bond fund at $3\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. It may be said that this is to be only temporarily raised, and then we shall have to go to London to convert it. But I do not think in London they would be content to convert £10 debentures; and it would cost more than $\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. to carry out a conversion scheme. There is, however, no limit in the Bill as to the amount to be raised by land-bonds. When a man comes to ask for a loan he is to get it, not in sovereigns, but in land-bonds in place of money. Well, that is paper money. It has been said, no doubt, by the poet,—

Blest paper credit! last and best supply
That lends corruption lighter wings to fly.

But the result of issuing paper money without a metallic basis is always calamitous to any country in which it is tried, and so it would be here. Well, the next thing I would ask honourable members to look at as one of the effects of this lending scheme is what would be its effect to the settler who has to pay this 6 per cent. If he has to pay a mortgage-tax in addition, the mortgage-tax is not quite $\frac{1}{2}$ per cent., but it will nearly amount to $\frac{1}{2}$ per cent., so that he will have to pay $6\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. for his money. I admit at once that at the end of thirty-six years he will be free; but how many of our settlers can look forward to being here in thirty-six years? Three-fourths of those who borrow will go to their graves mortgaged men. It may be a good thing for their successors or the next-of-kin under their wills, but, so far as they are personally concerned, they are going to their graves mortgaged men, and they will all their lives be paying that amount of $6\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. interest. I do not think, therefore, looking at it from the money-borrowers' point of view, even if the amount is wiped out in thirty-six years, it can be called a good monetary transaction.

An Hon. MEMBER.—They can pay up at any time.

Sir R. STOUT.—Yes; but I understand that the settlers to whom this money is to be advanced will be those who have no money to wipe it out. I am glad of the interruption of the honourable member, because it is leading

Sir R. Stout

up to an argument I was going to use. The honourable member seems almost to have apprehended what I was going to say. And I was going to say this: This loan is one which will last for thirty-six years odd, and before the end of that term the price of money, according to the Minister, will be reduced perhaps 1 per cent. The Government have to pay the same rate of interest for the thirty-six years, but the borrower is not bound to get the money for thirty-six years; and what becomes of the colony which has borrowed? The bonds will last thirty-six years, but if they convert them, as they talk of doing, they may be forty years' debentures; and, if they require again to lend the money out at 5 per cent. interest when money is cheaper, what is the result? If they can only get 4 per cent. for it the colony will suffer to the extent of £15,000 a year for every million and a half borrowed. I hope the honourable gentleman sees the point. If money is to be cheapened, and we have borrowed money on a forty-years' tenure of debentures, we cannot lend it out at 1½ per cent. margin. And what is to happen to the colony? The colony cannot pay its interest in London, because it has got no margin, and therefore the colony is plunged in debt. There is the inevitable conclusion. If you say money is to be cheapened, then, I say, from the borrowers' point of view also, it is a bad bargain if he is bound to go on with it for thirty-six years. But I say it is a bad bargain also from the colony's point of view—looking at the question from a money-lending point of view. If you have to pay interest in London at the rate of 3 or 4 per cent., and you are not lending in the colony with a sufficient margin—say, at 5 per cent.—the conclusion is inevitable. I say, looking at it from a money point of view, it is not a good transaction either for the colony or for the settler. The potentiality of evil in this scheme far exceeds anything of good there may be. Every year there is to be a huge borrowing transaction. The borrowing is to be endless, inasmuch as there is no date fixed, even as it was in the Lands for Settlement Bill. It is to go on for ever.

An Hon. MEMBER.—What about the security?

Sir R. STOUT.—The security has nothing to do with it. You might as well say that the State or the colony is to go on borrowing for ever because it could offer a good security. Times of depression may arise: then what is to happen? Are we to have repudiation? We must have increased taxation; and what does increased taxation mean? It means that one of the things that have destroyed States in the past will happen here—the excessive weight of taxation. That is the thing that strikes a State down to the dust. I see in this Bill the potentiality to injure our settlers, our industries, our credit, for assuredly, so soon as we begin borrowing, as we are pledged here to borrow by our various financial schemes, to the extent of two millions and a quarter a year,—for the lowest estimate exceeds that,—so soon will our credit in the London market go down; and that will not only affect our colony from a

State point of view, but it will affect every merchant, every manufacturer in our cities. It is true that under this Bill there is no aid for the manufacturer; and I say, if this colony is to progress, our manufacturers have as much right to be looked after as our settlers, because unless we go hand in hand, both increasing our pastoral products, our agricultural products, our fruit products, and also our other industrial enterprises—I mean our manufactures—we shall never rise to be a great colony. This Bill gives no aid to them. It is true it may give aid to some settlers, but I undertake to say that the settlers it will aid will not be the ones who require assistance. The difference of percentage they will gain under this Bill will not be, I believe, ½ per cent. A man who wants to borrow £500 or £1,000 will thus only gain £2 10s. to £5 a year by his transaction. That is all he will gain—a difference of ½ per cent. interest. It will not mean more at the rate money is going down: and for that we are to plunge this colony into a huge borrowing policy. I ask the House to pause and consider. I ask the House to take the figures I have given and work them out for themselves. Sir, it is said that the sting of some animals rests in the tail. The sting of this Bill is in its tail. If honourable members read the last clause they will see it is the most significant clause in it. It says the Bankruptcy Act of 1892 shall not apply to this Act. What does that mean? Why, it means that if a man is bankrupt he is never to be released from his Crown debt. That is what it means. His other creditors may, by an order of discharge, relieve him from liability, but once a man becomes indebted to the Crown under this Bill he will have to go down to his grave an undischarged bankrupt, if he has been a bankrupt, so far as this Government is concerned. Why is this put in? It is put in as the most significant thing in the whole Act. The Treasurer sees what this clause means. He knows that there will be default, and therefore the poor settler who has been foolish enough to pray for this cheap money is told, "If you go through the Bankruptcy Court you may get a discharge from your grocer or butcher; you may get a discharge from your bank or loan company; but from this money-lender, the Government, never. You may go down to your grave, and until that moment arrives you will remain a debtor to the Crown." There are other things that I have in my notes which, had time permitted, I should like to have gone into and explained, but I think I have said sufficient in the short time allotted me to speak to induce this House to pause and consider this Bill thoroughly before it becomes a party to a borrowing policy that will, I believe, work injury if not ruin to this colony,—that will in the end paralyse our industries. Though it may for a year or two bring about an apparent prosperity, we are doing what is often done by people who take stimulants. We are taking a stimulant, and so surely the reaction will come, and I for one will be no party to support such a policy.

11.30. Mr. E. M. SMITH.—Just as I thought, Sir, all along;—the professional lawyers, the money-lenders—

Sir R. STOUT.—I am not a money-lender.

Mr. E. M. SMITH.—You make money out of money-lending, as all lawyers do. They are the individuals who will denounce these financial proposals of the Government. We knew, from the day on which it was announced that the Government were going in for a cheap-money scheme, that it would receive opposition from the quarter I have alluded to. I listened very carefully to the Colonial Treasurer detailing the various clauses and the effect of the Bill, and putting that together with the Financial Statement I shall support the Colonial Treasurer and the Government in these proposals. It has not the slightest effect on me—these professional gentlemen's pleadings. I am here on the side of opposite interests to theirs. I am here in the interests of the struggling settlers, and in the interests of those people who have taken up small blocks of land on deferred payment, perpetual lease, and the eternal lease. I know that a scheme like this will be in the interests of these people. I know the struggles and trials of these men, who get up before daylight and work till dark; and I know that the greatest curse which these men have round their necks is the extraordinary interest which they are paying to the money-lender. I know that in my district, in hundreds of cases, they are paying 10 per cent.—aye, and more than that—because they have never been able to get released from the mortgages taken up years ago. The money-lenders will not release them in order that they may get money at a lower rate. Only a week or two ago some men came down from my district, and they were able to make an arrangement in Wellington for money at 2 per cent. less than they could get it in the district. It is not only the interest which has to be paid, but there are the other very large attendant expenses. The honourable member for Wellington Suburbs said that the Government had copied the Victorian Act. He wanted to make it appear that we were only following in the wake of Victoria. We were promised some three years ago that some scheme like this would be brought down. At that time a deputation of members of the House waited upon the Government and asked them to start some scheme which would bring down the rate of interest. Did not that deputation ask the Government not to confine these advances to freeholds? Did we not ask them to extend it to every system of tenure under the State; and did not the last Colonial Treasurer promise that deputation that that should be embodied in the measure? I am very glad to find that these men will be able to participate in the benefits of this Bill. There are a large number of hard working-men in my district who have taken up bush-land. They have cleared the bush, and have the land down in grass. And what is the result? There it is—splendid grass at this time of year; but they have not the stock to put on the land. If they were able to

properly stock their land they could supply the dairy factories with milk and get handsome returns. The result of this Bill will be to place large numbers of the working-classes in a splendid position. We know the large additional expense involved in going to lawyers and money-lenders for money. Many men are working from daylight till dark—for whom? For the benefit of themselves? For the benefit of their families? No; they are working for the mortgagee. In a colony like this, to have dear money and cheap labour—the thing is ridiculous. Those two things will not work in harmony together. As our staple products are not now fetching as much in the markets of the world as a few years ago, the producer cannot pay the same rate of interest as he formerly could pay. If he has not the same income, he should have a corresponding reduction in the interest he is paying upon his money. Have the monetary institutions and the lawyers endeavoured to bring down the rate of interest? I say they never have until they were forced to do so. Their policy is to keep interest as high as they possibly can. If this Bill is the means of reducing the rate of interest 2 per cent. it will do a grand thing for this colony. I shall support the Government in this proposal because I believe they have an anxious desire to benefit the people of the colony, to enable the men whom they have put on the land to better their condition. Numbers of men from Canterbury have settled on the land in my district. Those men would not go back to Canterbury under any circumstances; they are satisfied with their land, they are making steady progress, and would do still better if they could get some accommodation at a reasonable rate. A gentleman who is connected with a very large undertaking in this colony, and who was recently in England on a visit, told me that there is a hundred and eighty millions of money lying there uninvested. The various friendly societies there have thirty-three millions of money which they cannot invest in the Old Country. Considering the difference between the interest obtainable at Home and that which will be obtained in the colony, we can see that there is an outlet for large sums of money at present lying idle at Home. There are plenty of people in the Old Country—trustees and others—to whom the State guarantee or control will give confidence, and who will be glad to invest their money under such a proposal as is contained in this Bill. By enabling the settlers to get more stock it will increase the productiveness of the country, and will tend to bring about prosperity. I should like to see the limit made £1,000: the smaller the loans the more small farmers will participate in the good things given under this scheme. I do not want to detract from that class who are opposed to this Bill. I know they are good colonists and able men. But I know they have their particular interests and class to serve. I listened to the carefully-prepared and well-delivered speech of the honourable member for Patea, and I give him very great credit because he wound up his speech by

stating what lowering the rate of interest would do for the colony. He said it would give peace, prosperity, and progress; and I agree with him. I want it to be known to the House and to the country that, from the first hour I knew the Government were preparing a financial scheme to give cheap money to the industrious settler, I have been watching anxiously for the Bill to come down. The honourable member for Wellington Suburbs is wrong when he tries to make out that the Government are only copying Victoria. Victoria is copying us. If this Bill had been brought in when first prepared by an able financial gentleman in Wellington, and the Government first indicated the lines on which it was coming forward, and when a deputation of about thirty-two members of the House waited on the late Colonial Treasurer—and I was one of the foremost among that deputation, because I knew what good results would ensue from the settler getting cheap money from the Government—we had his assurance that the Bill would be brought down at an early date, and would embody the perpetual-lease man and the eternal-lease man, and give them an opportunity to benefit by this Bill. We were then satisfied, and from that date to the present time we have been waiting for the Bill. And now we have got the Bill, with a few amendments in Committee I am going to support the Government, firmly and conscientiously believing it will do good. Wherever the settlers of the colony are prosperous, wherever the colony is progressing, manufactories will rise up; but if we are to make this colony the great and glorious colony it will be we must have the two classes of the community—the producer and the consumer—working in harmony together. We must have large manufactories to consume the produce of the producers. I think I have said sufficient to show that this Bill will have my support in and out of the House, freely and conscientiously believing as I do that it is in the interests of the industrial classes, and in the interests of the masses, regardless of the classes. Every mail brings me letters from settlers waiting to get small loans to complete their improvements. I hope small loans will be granted to complete improvements, even if the cash is withheld until the improvements are actually made. This system has only to be tried to prove its soundness.

Mr. MILLAR.—Sir, I feel somewhat difficult in rising to talk on this very important matter, but, having listened carefully to some of the speeches, I for one am not prepared to support the Bill as it stands. I was returned to the House opposed to a borrowing policy, and I intend to keep my pledge in that respect. I approve of the principle in this Bill,—the reduction of interest,—and I believe if that can be effected, as it can be, it will benefit the colony; but I object to going to the London market and placing ourselves any further under the heel of the money-lender in England. And this proposal does that most emphatically, because it aims at getting £1,500,000 advanced on mortgage. There is a provision that the money is to be lent for a definite period, and

that the interest and capital should be paid back during that period, but there is also provision whereby the money can be inscribed and become part of the permanent debt of the colony. I may be twitted with the fact that I have already, by my vote, supported a certain amount of borrowing; and I admit I have. But I am amply justified in that, because the question of the purchase of estates was one that had been prominently before the people of the colony, and the people must know that estates cannot be purchased without money; therefore I conceive I was justified in voting as I did, and I shall consider myself justified in voting for borrowing money for opening up the country. But when asked to vote for a Bill which goes directly in the direction of borrowing £1,500,000 for a purpose that has not been before the people, as I shall endeavour to show, I cannot support the Bill as it stands. It is quite true that during the election a cheap-money scheme was talked about, but many of us imagined that that scheme was one the outlines of which were depicted in the Press, and that was something on the following lines: that the Government were going to act as agents for the money-lender in England, to receive money and dispose of it on mortgage here, and the only liability was the contingent liability of guaranteeing the interest. Such a scheme as that, whilst possibly slower than that embodied in the Bill, to my mind offers equal advantages without any risk, and if the Bill went in that direction I should be fully prepared to support it. I believe, myself, that if the Bill were carefully handled in Committee it might still be made a workable measure. I thoroughly approve of the scheme of land-bonds submitted by the Treasurer, and the reason I do so is in exact contradiction to the objection of the senior member for Wellington City to the introduction of bonds—because it would introduce more paper money. That is the very reason why I should support it. I say that we in this colony, who are supposed to be leading the van, are very much behindhand in this matter, because already in Queensland they have a note-issue, and Victoria and New South Wales are also doing the same thing, but we are evidently not prepared to touch it. This, however, is a step in the right direction. The Treasurer proposes in this Bill to sell these land-bonds. I cannot see why he cannot issue them direct, because it is provided that they shall pass from hand to hand without assignment, and it appears to me they are in very much the same position as a £10 bank-note, with the additional security that we have the land and the State at the back of them. Therefore I do not see why we should go through the dual performance of selling these, and getting the cash and handing the cash over to an individual, because the person who would buy these from the State would as soon buy them from the individual to whom they might be sent. Then, in regard to borrowing, we are told that land has reached the bed-rock value. I should like to see any honourable gentleman say that we have reached that, and prove it. If any one looks back for ten

years—in fact, I will go back as far as 1873—he will see there has been a steady decline in the value of all products up to the present time; and, further, according to all financial authorities in the Old Country now, and in other parts of the world, there is a still-continued reduction in values owing to the appreciation of gold. Then, granted that it were so, and that we had reached the bed-rock of value, we are doing a great injury to New Zealand if we are alienating our lands for a thousand years at 4 per cent. on what are termed bed-rock values. The principal portion of the Bill I object to is Part II., where it is provided that we shall go on the London money-market and borrow money there. If this Part were cut out altogether, and the loan—because a loan it is under any circumstances—were confined simply to land-bonds, I do not think there would be the same danger to the colony as exists at present, provided also that the money—principal, and interest which comes in from time to time—should go to create a sinking fund for the redemption of these land-bonds when due. If it were confined strictly to this issue of land-bonds, and the redemption of them by the money when it is received, the danger to the State would be very small, and therefore I think it would be much better than going on the London market for £1,500,000. Then, in regard to one of the clauses about delegating the power to Agents, the Treasurer stated that was in all Loan Bills. I am comparatively new in the House, and this is the first Loan Bill I have seen, but, if such is the case, I for one protest against power being delegated to an agent in London to fix any terms he likes for loans in the colony. We in the House should state as to what terms and on what conditions we are going to borrow.

Mr. WARD.—They always ask for instructions by cable.

Mr. MILLAR.—If you look in the Bill the whole power is delegated to Agents, and they can delegate the power to sub-agents, and make such conditions and terms as they please.

An Hon. MEMBER.—Oh, no.

Mr. MILLAR.—It is as clear as can be in section 29:—

“The aforesaid Agents shall have full power and authority to prescribe the mode and conditions of repayment of the aforesaid loans, the time of such repayment, the rates of interest thereon, and the time and place when and where principal and interest shall be made payable.”

Mr. WARD.—I will explain the point to the honourable gentleman. Supposing, for instance, the ordinary Agent appointed by the Government in the first instance were struck with disease while important operations were proceeding, another Agent would need to act. Nothing would be done without reference to and the concurrence of the Government. It is the usual provision, and it has never in practice proved unsuitable or faulty.

Mr. MILLAR.—All I have to say of it is that, reading the clause as it stands, it struck me as giving too much power to Agents, because

it appeared to give full power, to fix the rates of interest, the terms on which the loan should be granted, and when it was to be redeemed; and I, for one, would object if such were the case. However, the Treasurer assures us that it is only done under instructions of the Government, and it will not have the same application as it appears to have. I think there is a little too much importance attached to the benefit to farmers under this scheme. I ask, what great benefit would it be to a farmer if you save him 1 per cent., if the value of his produce is going down 10 per cent.? Is he going to derive benefit from it?

An Hon. MEMBER.—If he gets it at 1 per cent.

Mr. MILLAR.—There is not much money to be had at 1 per cent. in New Zealand, nor will there be for some time to come. That is my opinion. I say that the benefit that the farmer is going to derive from saving 1 per cent. interest is immaterial if his produce is going to fall rapidly. I assert the cause of this depression is much deeper than the question of interest, and that cause will have to be dealt with by New Zealand, because we obtain little or nothing from bringing our opinions to bear upon the English financiers. The question we shall have to deal with is that of the currency. I know that England is the stumbling-block in the way of meeting the question of the currency; but why should we go and borrow money from her, and still further strengthen the position she has taken up?—because as long as she maintains her present position on the gold question so long can we look for a steady reduction in the prices of all products. I admit this is one of the most difficult of questions, and I give the Colonial Treasurer every credit for having tackled a most difficult subject. In the election last year, in speaking on this question, I pledged myself against borrowing in the London market. Believing that that is not in the interest of the colony, and believing that our past borrowing has led to the present trouble and depression in the colony, I deem it my duty not to support any measure to go on the London market to borrow more. Then, the honourable member for Wellington City stated distinctly that the money was short in the colony, and he laid the blame on the Treasury benches. But those benches have had nothing to do with the view the honourable gentleman has taken. The honourable member knows that the depression has been world-wide. What has become of the money we know has been withdrawn? We know that the money has been withdrawn from New Zealand, and that the financial institutions have taken away the sum of £1,100,000 from the colony in twelve months; and the question is asked, What becomes of the money? Why, Sir, it has been sent to Australia to bolster up the business of one of the banks there, which, having purchased the business of one of the burst-up banks, wanted all the money it could lay its hands on, so as to show how strong it was, and thereby to attract business from other banks. The honourable mem-

Mr. Millar

ber for Patea also laid the blame on the Government; but he knows, like the honourable member for Wellington Suburbs, that the Treasury benches have had little or nothing to do with the question. Therefore the continual blaming of the Ministry for the present condition of affairs,—when we know and feel well that they have had nothing to do with it, but that the cause is much deeper,—to my mind is a useless waste of words. Then, we were told that if this scheme went on it would certainly reduce the credit of the colony. If we went in for a direct loan, as proposed, I can quite believe the statement that it will ultimately reduce the credit of the colony; but it strikes me that, under this scheme, if you take away from the financial institutions what they look upon as their best security, and force a lot of money back into their coffers, one result will be that that money is going to be kept idle, and it will be sent out of the colony. The borrowing, I know, will be reduced, but the manufacturers in the towns will be compelled to pay more for their money than they have hitherto paid; and the next result will be that there will be reduction of wages in the towns to make up the increased interest. That is one of the vexed questions which strike me as very likely to occur. I hope it may not be the case; but, knowing the lines upon which these institutions run, I think it is highly probable that such would be the case, and it is because the Government are not prepared to go fully into this question of controlling the finances that I fear this measure may have an injurious effect upon the manufacturers. With regard to the limit of £5,000, I fail to see why the limit should be fixed at this amount. During the sitting of the Royal Commission in New South Wales in 1891 the manager of the Savings-Bank of New South Wales was called before the Commission, and in his evidence he stated that they had prepared a Bill to be presented to the New South Wales Parliament with the object of increasing the amount which they might advance upon one property from £10,000 to £35,000, and for the reason that some of those properties in Sydney and elsewhere had been offered under mortgage to the Savings-Bank, and it could not touch them owing to this limit to the amount. I say that you should not limit the amount to £5,000, if there is a really good property offered, and if the Lending Board is satisfied. I maintain that the holders of property in the cities will not reap the benefit of the scheme so much as the country settlers, and, while the colony is held responsible for the payment of the debt, every one in this colony has the same right, and ought to be granted the same privilege. I want none of it; I am neither a borrower nor a lender, nor do I possess money, so I am talking perfectly independently. But I look to its ultimate effect upon the colony, and also its immediate effect; so, while agreeing with the principle enunciated, and with a desire of the Colonial Treasurer to control the finances of the colony, I do not believe in the measure

by which he proposes to do it. In Committee I shall endeavour to amend the Bill in the direction I have indicated. I do not intend to oppose the second reading, as I believe it may be possible to improve the Bill and make it a useful measure in Committee.

Mr. STEVENS.—I have a few words to say upon this subject, and I am exceedingly sorry to differ from the honourable gentleman who sits beside me in this seat, and who is always so kindly disposed towards me. I refer to the honourable member for Chalmers. The object of the measure I presume to be to enable persons who intend to occupy, or who are occupying, lands which are unproductive to make those lands productive in the future. With this object, it is proposed to borrow money for the purpose of assisting those who have hands with which to work, willing minds, plenty of knowledge, but no money. They must be supplied with sufficient capital to enable them to utilise their labour profitably. The opinion has been expressed by many honourable members to-night that this should be a huge financial scheme for the purpose of supplying every one who has not plenty of money with sufficient means to enable him to carry out the most huge and largest farming transactions that could be imagined. I hold a perfectly different view from that. I hold that what we should do, and what this Bill ought to do, is to help all persons who are in a small way, but who are struggling to get on and make two blades of grass grow where only one grew before. My honourable friend has stated that in Australia they have a limit of £10,000, and they now require it to be increased to £35,000. That is a fallacy under which a great many members in this House labour—that there is a similarity between this colony, in regard to agricultural and pastoral pursuits, and Australia. But the circumstances are as dissimilar as the poles, inasmuch as in Australia the land is measured by miles and here it is measured by acres. There the runholder cannot prosper unless he has so many square miles of country; but here the farmer—nay, even the small grazier and dairyman—can prosper successfully and well on a few hundred acres. But, Sir, our farmers do require to be relieved from the terrible depression and distress which has always been upon them since they were compelled to pay a very high rate of interest by the great monetary institutions of this colony, from the time of its inception to the present time. I can give instances where farmers have borrowed money at 10 per cent., and have had to pay 2½ per cent. extra as a procuration-fee on a cash advance on freehold property. Members would be astonished if I were to give them instances where borrowers paid 12½ per cent. within the last few years on very first-class security. Well, the honourable member for Wellington City (Mr. Bell) shakes his head, as though he possessed all the wisdom of this House; but I speak from practical experience, and I am sorry to say I have been compelled in my own business to charge 10 per cent., and 2½ per cent., on a cash advance, to

poor settlers, because the monetary institution my firm was dealing with were charging 9 per cent. I was certainly entitled to 1 per cent. for my trouble in the matter. These are actual facts, which cannot be denied; and I can assure honourable members that, had the settlers along the west coast of this Island had the opportunity many years ago that this Bill is bound to afford them, there are many there who would have been living in affluence on their small areas of land, and many who would have been happy to-day who are burdened and—if I may use the phrase—"down-trodden," and who have been unable to keep their heads above water, and to free themselves from the difficulties under which they have laboured for the last few years. I will explain to honourable gentlemen one of the reasons why they have been depressed. It is because those honourable gentlemen on the other side of the House used as a platform cry the policy of the present Government for the purpose of endeavouring to get back on these benches. Many of them have said, "Ha! what will this Liberal Government do when they come into office? Why, they are driving the capital out of the country." I say it is a vile bird that fouls its own nest, and I do hope that we, the settlers of New Zealand, whatever our politics may be, shall always fairly state our financial condition; because it is a deplorable thing that it should go forth to the world from the floor of this House that we, the settlers of New Zealand, are personally the people who are decrying our own condition. I say, Sir, that is not the kind of legislation and the kind of public spirit that is necessary for the prosperity of our Colony of New Zealand. Of this I can assure the honourable gentlemen opposite: that if they were now on these benches they would at once say, "See what we have done. Do you see how the credit of the colony has gone up in England!" I have heard it, and heard it continually, said since the present Government came into office that enormous sums of money have been withdrawn from this colony to get higher interest. Where? In the Cape Colony? In America? In Australia? No. New Zealand is *par excellence* the colony of the whole world for the investment of money, and we should induce that money to come here and open up the grand country we have in both Islands of this colony, and to produce what we ought to produce. In a very few years indeed our output should be at least doubled—within the next seven or ten years—and the only true and satisfactory way, the only true solution of the difficulty that now exists in regard to our produce, is to give the farmer cheap money, in order that he may in a short time be able to hold his head above financial water and have some degree of hope. The Colonial Treasurer, who introduced the Bill, I think, said that all the principal Government monetary institutions here had been very successfully conducted—the Public Trust Office and the Government Insurance Department. And, although I am giving this measure my most hearty support, I would point out this

Mr. Stevens

fact: that they have conducted their business most successfully on the principle of charging from $5\frac{1}{2}$ to $7\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. interest. They have made certain losses up to that point of interest; but when the rate of interest is limited to 5 per cent. I think we cannot hope to have such a satisfactory result as has appeared with respect to these other two institutions, because, we will say broadly, the difference is as between 5 and 7 per cent.; and therefore, had the margin been 5 instead of 7 per cent., I take it the losses shown must have been somewhat greater, and I feel very confident that the honourable gentleman who has introduced this Bill has given his consideration to that question. With respect to the 1 per cent. which is to accrue as a sinking fund, extending over a certain period, I understand that it is to be paid into a particular account for the purpose of accruing as a sinking fund which will provide against loss; but that sinking fund will have its debit side. The owner of the property pays his 1 per cent., and the whole time the payment is being made that property is being relieved of a certain liability, and each property must necessarily be separately credited with the amount of money which is paid into the sinking fund. And it is not such a sinking fund, or fund of security, which would be provided if it were a general insurance company; but each property must be credited with the amount paid into the sinking fund. That, I hope, will be carefully considered. Now, Sir, with respect to the question of individual borrowing through the Government. Why, the money-lender at Home would immediately say, "Yes; we are perfectly willing, but will you guarantee each settler's account?" If not, they will say, "We do not require the Government to intervene between us and the best securities we can get in the world." They would have their own agent, and take their 7 or 9 per cent.; but, in this case, with the Government guarantee, they have nothing to pay, but purely and simply to receive their interest. And, more than this, if you were to do this financial transaction piecemeal, you could not possibly get this money at the same low rate of interest. For who would be prepared to give a million and a half of money? They would say, "No"; they would have to establish another great monetary institution similar to those we have in the colony at the present time. But when the Government say, "We will take up your million and a half in one sum," the money-lender at Home is perfectly willing to lend his money at $3\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. But, however, there is this certain fact about it: The Government must take every care and every precaution in the appointment of their Valuers; because it is there that the margin is made. The margin is left purely and simply to the knowledge, or mind, or belief of the individual who values a particular farm; and, if these valuations are made with care, and made judiciously, I have no fear whatever but that the land of New Zealand is well worth the advance of two-thirds the amount of value. I am speaking of partially-occupied properties, and I say the Govern-

ment will be very foolish indeed if they make advances upon properties which are not occupied—if they make advances upon properties which have not been partially brought into cultivation, or upon properties which will not ultimately become homes of people: because there are many blocks of land in this Island, and in the South Island also, where you might make a valuation, and I can assure honourable gentlemen the valuation made is perfectly nil, and unless there is some hope of interest being got out of the property it will be a grave mistake; and, so far as I am concerned, my strong belief is that the maximum sum to be advanced—£5,000—is far too great. My conception of this idea was that the Government were about to borrow money and lend it to persons who actually had none, or very little money indeed, but who would develop the country in small areas if given cheap money. And we will say, for example, you lend up to two-thirds value; if £2,000 were the maximum sum to be advanced, you lend to two-thirds. That would represent a property-value of £3,000; and when the property is valued at £3,000, it means that the owner of that property has £1,000 of an interest in it. His value is £1,000. Such being the case, I say that any one who possesses more than £1,000 has every opportunity, every facility, for obtaining money through some other channel. But I do say the people to whom we should offer special inducements to come to this country are people with small capital, who would take up the land which is so peculiarly situated for small farms, dairy industry, and small grazing-runs. We should induce the small capitalist to come to this country, and not extend the benefits of this measure to the large capitalists. I hope honourable gentlemen will not misunderstand me when I say I have no objection to those who have acquired very large interests in this country. They deserve every credit for it, and no one would desire more than myself to see them profit by their exertions; but we are making, we shall make, a very grave mistake indeed if the average advances amount to £1,000; for a very good reason. Let us take, for example, the thousands of settlers who will occupy little more than 320 acres, because the maximum amount of land to be taken up is 640 acres of first-class land, and there will be thousands who will have to go without assistance if many of these at £5,000 were taken up; and therefore I hope the Treasurer will see his way, when the Bill is in Committee, to considerably reduce the amount proposed, even if he does not bring it down to the sum that I have suggested.

Mr. BUDDO.—Sir, I may hardly agree with a previous speaker that by the introduction of this cheap-money scheme we shall be able to increase our products during the next ten years to something like double what they now are, but I do believe that with the introduction of this cheap-money scheme we shall get increased prosperity. Looking at the rates of mortgage interest on freehold security during the past few years, I find there has been very

little rise or fall upon the good securities—I say good securities with a 50-per-cent. margin; but there has been a rise, last year, on somewhat indifferent securities—those reaching up to a three-fifths value, or only a third margin. Those securities have got considerably tighter in the money-market. At the present time statistics will tell us there is a considerable amount of money in the English money-market lying idle. The Bank of England, which is a good financial barometer, has thirty millions of money lying in its coffers, and if we gave the English financiers an opportunity to invest their money safely there is not the slightest doubt some of the money in the Bank of England must come to New Zealand. I take it the principal object of this scheme is to find money for what we call small settlers, or, in other words, settlers farming small areas of land. To those who may take up small portions of land, with a somewhat limited amount of capital, the introduction of this cheap-money scheme—lending up to two-thirds of the estimated value—will be a great boon indeed. Those who are going on Crown lands at present, or on this system of allotments that the Government are now putting before the public, and spending their £300 or £400 of capital in stock or improvements, probably before the year's income comes in they may be stranded; whereas, upon pledging half their improvements to enable them to pay their way for a little, this measure will save them from absolute ruin. As a landholder I cannot deny the best securities will be those valued at from £700 up to £4,000. These securities are always the best, for this reason: that that class of farm-land is always the most

12.30. saleable; there is always a ready market for a farm ranging in value from £1,000 to £5,000, and, of course, the security of this class of property will naturally be the best; and I have no doubt the management of this cheap-money scheme will take care that a reasonable amount of this cheap money will be placed on absolutely safe securities, although it may be possible that the margin is rather a narrow one. I myself approve of the one-half margin of security, for the very obvious reason that what we call a first-class mortgage security at the present time is only about one-half of its value. But, if we have got down to the bed-rock of land-values at the present time, I believe a two-thirds security will be absolutely safe, for the one-third difference in the margin will be sufficient security for the money lent. I do not think it will be any great hardship to the Colony of New Zealand if land does rise by this cheap-money scheme. We hear a great deal of talk about the unearned increment. We have rather more trouble at the present moment on account of a fall in the values of the agricultural and pastoral lands in this colony, and, if any rise occurs through the introduction of the cheap money scheme, I believe it will be found that no loss will result to the State, but that it will vastly benefit from it. I have no doubt that loans to leaseholders will be very carefully gone about,

and, as the Government is putting in a clause in this Bill to meet these cases, they will be in a position to understand how far they may go in lending money on improvements. I have no hesitation in saying that it is an absolutely safe investment to lend money on one-half the value of improvements on Crown lands. The cheap money that may be invested in these lands will naturally allow these small settlers to pull along until such time as they get an income. And, after that, if there is a rise in the value of our wheat and wool, we may expect that they will be able to pull through, and possibly they may be able to clear off the loan before the expiry of the thirty-six and a half years. It has been said by some of those who have spoken to-night that the borrowing of the money under this scheme on the London money-market will lower the credit of this colony, but I do not think anything of the sort will occur, for this reason: that while we borrow on our debentures we pledge the credit of the colony no doubt, but under this scheme we pledge the land of the colony, and the land of the colony must be a much safer security than gold in the bank, because it has an earning capacity. It may rise or fall in value as the market rises or falls, but, at all events, it will be ample security for any money we may lend on it at 5½ per cent. Now, the question of lending money on highly-improved properties has been touched upon. In the case of high-priced town properties I have no doubt it will be somewhat of a risky experiment, but if it is taken in hand by the management it will, no doubt, be gone about in the same way that other financial institutions take the matter in hand—by carefully writing-down the estimated value of the piece of property to the lowest amount to which it is likely to fall. The Opposition spoke of restoring confidence, but I think they take the wrong way to go about it—throwing doubt on the likelihood of our land rising in value. I consider it would be a better plan to restore confidence if they said the land was likely to rise in value; and I am sure there is no chance of our credit rising in the financial market if we go about saying it is not likely that we have yet reached bed-rock in the prices of our agricultural and pastoral produce. I do not think that confidence has been lost in this colony by the settlers in it. They are now suffering from the depression that prevails all over the world; but when that depression clears away no doubt we shall have our share of the good things that will follow; and the settlers of this colony are made of better stuff than to say we shall never rise above the depression because we are having a bad time of it now. I dissent very much from the statement that is made that the average rate of mortgage interest is under 7 per cent. I know something of the value of money at the present time on good freehold property, and I do not think the actual price of money at the present moment is less than 6½ per cent., with a margin of 50 per cent. in value of security. Of course, if the margin is less than that, the rate of interest rises very materially; and I believe that, in-

Mr. Buddo

stead of the landowner having to pay an average of under 7 per cent., we might safely put it down at much nearer 8 per cent. where the security is not so good. In criticizing this cheap-money scheme, I am very much pleased to see that no new office is to be created. It would be a very great tax, I consider, upon this scheme if a new office were to be created with a staff of highly-paid officials right down to the lowest grade; and, if it can be incorporated with the present financial institutions of the Government, it is more likely to be managed on more economical lines. There is another point that I wish to speak about, and that is the question of the Valuers being put on salary. I think that this would be an expensive plan to meet the case in hand, because, if the Valuer is to be of any use at all for the purpose of valuing properties in order that the State may lend money upon them, he must have local knowledge of the productive qualities of the land, and I should think that forty square miles of any district would be sufficient for the Valuer to have any local knowledge of, and so his time might not be fully occupied. There is no doubt that the best way of meeting the case would be by a fixed charge per diem. It would be a more economical plan, and we should be likely to get the services of men who have local knowledge, and who would have something to lose in the event of their information being incorrect. The same method might be applied to the Solicitors, whom it is proposed to put upon a salary basis. I believe these offices can be better managed by allowing the Valuers to be taken from the localities where they are to be employed, and where they have a personal knowledge of their work; and a Solicitor may be employed in the same manner. I think that system would tend to give confidence to the borrower as well as to the State. I trust that this new departure of the Government will prove to be entirely successful. It is, of course, no new scheme, and it has been tried in some European countries with very great success. I trust it will take effect soon, and, though it should be gone about cautiously at the start, it will in time expand of its own accord. Inquiry will result, and, if money can be had at the price spoken of, and as set forth in the schedule, the system of paying off the principal by instalments of ¼ per cent. every half-year will gradually lead to the lowering of the debt of the borrower: and, while property may be depreciated a little by the lowering of the value of it from the depreciation of the prices of produce, there will be a counteracting advantage in this steady lowering of the loan to the State, and I am sure that very great benefit will accrue to the borrower if the Bill becomes law.

Mr. MCGOWAN.—It would be very unkind of me to inflict a speech upon honourable members at this hour of the morning. I therefore shall not do so, but will merely say one or two words upon a view of the case that strikes me. First of all, Sir, a great number of the speeches that have been made to-night would, I imagine, have been much better made

in Committee. Now, the honourable member for Wellington City (Sir R. Stout) made a most excellent speech upon the question; but I consider that his criticism was unfair. Criticism, to be true, must be honest and just. While the honourable gentleman pointed out faults in the scheme, I think, at the same time, he ought to have at least taken notice of any advantages which it presents. I must say that the speech of the honourable gentleman throughout seemed to me at least to be an attempt to find fault all through, with very little effort being made to state anything that bore favourably upon the measure before the House. He pointed out the different losses that would accrue to the Government between the time of the loan being obtained and the time of its distribution, and also the losses that would take place with reference to the Assurance Fund. Now, that honourable gentleman must have known, as every member of the House would know, that there would be a certain amount of loss at times in the issue of the money; but at the same time the honourable gentleman never pointed out the advantage that the colony would gain by relending the moneys that are to be paid in annually. Now, if there is anything that more than another he laid great stress upon it was that this is a mercantile transaction and should be regarded from a mercantile point of view. Well, let us look at it from a mercantile point of view; and, if there is one strong point in this particular Bill, it is undoubtedly the point that the money paid in is to be immediately lent again, if required; the consequence being that, to a certain extent, the Government will be carrying on as a loan society upon the ordinary, old-fashioned building-society principles which, under an interest of, say, 6½ or 8 per cent., was returning to the shareholders as much as 9 or 12 per cent. in the actual profits received. Such a course will go on under this Bill, because the interest being repaid gradually will permit of it being made available for further loans. Then, the honourable gentleman pointed out another difficulty—namely, that a larger amount of money would be in hand, which the Government were paying interest on, than they could lend. There may be a larger amount in hand than can be lent to settlers; but does he not know that the local bodies throughout the colony are continually wanting money for public purposes, and that the securities of these institutions are of the very best, and that there would be no danger of the Government running any risk of overburdening themselves in that respect? It would be very easy, by legislation, to enable the local bodies to take advantage of the money that is found through the institution of Consols and so on, if the Government had more money than the settlers required. The administration is, no doubt, a serious matter, and I do not think it will be as economical as the Colonial Treasurer pointed out. I confess I am endeavouring to look at the Bill from two points of view—from the point of view of a friend of the Government, and also from the point of view of a friend of the settlers—and I am afraid there is

likely to be danger in the administration. I do not think that this large business will be likely to be managed as economically as the honourable gentleman pointed out. We all agree with the principle of cheap money, but it is a very far-reaching and wide principle. Some honourable gentlemen think that these matters can be very easily arranged through a paper currency or some other method, and that we can inflate a currency with the greatest ease, forgetting that these things cannot be done,—that the solid material must remain behind them. The honourable member for Wellington City pointed out the danger of issuing these Consols, and said that there must be a metallic basis behind the paper money. He might have made even more of that argument. There must be more than a metallic basis, for this reason: that the metallic basis is easily moved and changed, and, if you have only a metallic basis for your representative paper money, a few years may change the metallic basis entirely. The real strength of a country is its land and what can be produced from it. That is the one thing that brings back the metallic currency once it has been taken away by other causes. That is the real strength of a country. The question of cheap money opens up another question. What is cheap money really in essence? It appears to me that money of all kinds is neither more nor less than stored labour: it is simply labour crystallized. Now, in the ordinary uses and requirements of money we have hitherto been guided in this colony by the ordinary law of supply and demand. That at the present time is proposed by the Bill to be changed. There an element comes in that has never been introduced into the ordinary law of supply and demand in reference to this crystallized labour. Now in order to produce this cheap money we add the strength of the Government security. That must have the effect, undoubtedly, of cheapening money all over the country; and if it cheapens money all over the country it must also tend in the direction of causing money to go to other places where it will receive a greater return. The tendency necessarily will be that money, if it has been taken from the country before, must under this law be taken in larger quantities. The principle must act in that direction. And there is another thing in which there is a little danger. If money is cheapened by the action of the Government, and if money is crystallized labour, will it not have an effect on labour and tend to reduce wages? I think so. There may be something in that: and undoubtedly the greatest care must be taken, if we are to go upon the principle of making this really a mercantile speculation. There can be nothing for it but to lend largely and safely; but there is a great danger in that, and I think it would have been better and safer for the welfare of the colony if the Colonial Treasurer had been somewhat more modest in his attempts at producing cheap money for the present, and, instead of lending large sums, lent very small sums indeed—in fact, the smaller the better. One honourable member said that he was strongly opposed to borrowing.

Now, why the honourable gentleman should say that he is strongly opposed to borrowing, and at the same time be in favour of providing this cheap money, I cannot understand. How is it to be provided unless it is obtained in the first instance to pay off the mortgages? There is no question the money must be obtained, and, as in these days money is not rained down from heaven, it must be borrowed in the ordinary way. I hope the Treasurer will consider this question of cheap money from all sides, because it has a bearing not only on our immediate interests, but upon the whole future of this colony; and it must have a bearing not only on this colony, but on all the other colonies: therefore, owing to the frequent communication and to the extreme sensitiveness of capital, anything that tends to disturb it in any direction must be applied with the very greatest care.

Mr. MACKINTOSH.—Sir, I am not prepared to accept all that was contained in the speech made by the honourable member for Chalmers. The borrowing proposals in this Bill are not borrowing in the usual sense. The Bill simply extends the State guarantee to the extent of one million and a half in order to benefit the settlers of this colony. In fact, I venture to assert that it is being done in a proper manner, in order that the people of this new country may be able to get money at a moderate rate of interest. It is an absolute necessity, if the settlement of this colony is to continue to progress, that the Government should interfere. It is a well-known fact that in Otago and Southland, at any rate—and I am told the same is the case in other parts of this colony—money is not obtainable by settlers under the lease-in-perpetuity system. In Otago and Southland the money-lenders have agreed not to assist the settlers under that system on any account whatever, their object being to destroy the lease-in-perpetuity system, and thereby to harass the Government. I have heard from time to time of the danger of driving capital out of the country; but to me that threat has never been a source of terror. It is quite clear to me that money can be made to flow to this colony in a steady stream. Hitherto the banks and loan-and-mortgage companies have introduced money into the colony. They are not in a position to do so at the present time; therefore it becomes an absolute necessity that the Government should introduce a measure of this kind, and I am proud to see the Colonial Treasurer take the matter up in the manner he has done. From end to end of the colony there is but one feeling among settlers—a feeling of relief, a feeling that they will get just treatment. I shall have several amendments to propose when the Bill is in Committee, one of them being in regard to the 1 per cent. sinking fund, which should not be insisted upon for the first three years after the loan is obtained. There should be a period during which settlers should get the loan at the lowest possible rate of interest. That should end in three years, and after that the

Mr. McGowan

1 per cent. should be paid. What the honourable member for Chalmers pledged himself on the hustings to vote against was borrowing money for the construction of useless railways that would not pay working-expenses; such borrowing, in fact, as Sir Julius Vogel proposed to the extent of £10,000,000 for the construction of additional useless railways, in order that this colony might go ahead by leaps and bounds. In this case the credit of the colony is made use of in order to obtain money at a moderate rate of interest, so that the surplus money of the Mother-country might flow to the colony a perennial spring, as I trust it will do. I look forward to the time when the Colonial Treasurer will introduce other measures to assist industries. However, this is a first step in the right direction, and I am glad to see that it has been so well received by the House. It is melancholy to hear the remarks of the senior member for Wellington City, the great Liberal of the past, in denunciation of this measure, and grudging the unfortunate settlers of the colony a little relief. The Government is accused of bringing about a state of depression, and the falling-off of the revenue is attributed to the gentlemen who occupy the Treasury benches, in forgetfulness of the fact that the low price of wheat for several years back is much more likely to have been the cause. In fact, taking into consideration the extremely low prices that have ruled for our staple products, wheat and wool, it is a wonder that things are not worse than they are. The gentlemen occupying the Treasury benches have done their "level best" to keep the affairs of the colony right; and I trust they may long occupy their present position. This measure is one the colony requires; and yet the renowned Sir Robert Stout denounces it! Will the people of the colony denounce it? No; they look toward it with hope, and they will not be disappointed. It has been said that this is only a temporary relief. Nothing of the kind. It is the commencement of a new order of things, when we shall have money for within a fraction over what it is obtainable for in the Mother-country. We have to compete in the markets of the world; we must go outside our own colony in order to find a market for our produce; and therefore it is obvious that we must get money at a moderate rate to enable us to compete. It is too late to detain the House longer, but I wish to express the pleasure I feel in seeing that which I have looked forward to for the last twenty years is an accomplished fact. If this had been done twelve years ago in this colony the depression would have been removed, and many hundreds of first-rate colonists would not have been driven, as they have been, into the Insolvency Courts and to utter ruin. The money which was so cheap in London should have been introduced here by some such scheme as this.

Debate adjourned.

The House adjourned at five minutes past one o'clock a.m.

END OF EIGHTY-FIFTH VOLUME.

the house
 himself :
 borrow
 as railro
 nces ; ac
 vel propo
 e conside
 s, in use
 leaps as
 the color
 money as
 the surpl
 hit flow :
 I trust
 when a
 other me
 t, this is
 and I re
 ll receive
 hear to
 Wellington
 in dem
 ng the r
 ttle rein
 ng about
 -off of a
 n who a
 grateful
 s for se
 y to be
 consider
 e relatit
 bl, it is
 they ex
 y bench
 the atlas
 they are
 This me
 I yet to
 in. W.
 t? S.
 they w
 said the
 shing :
 of a me
 e move
 : obtain
 have s
 rid : w
 ur to the
 ore it :
 a. m
 t is in
 I we
 ng the
 the he
 ll to
 s enter
 red, as
 paid so
 into the
 h. The
 three
 in and

